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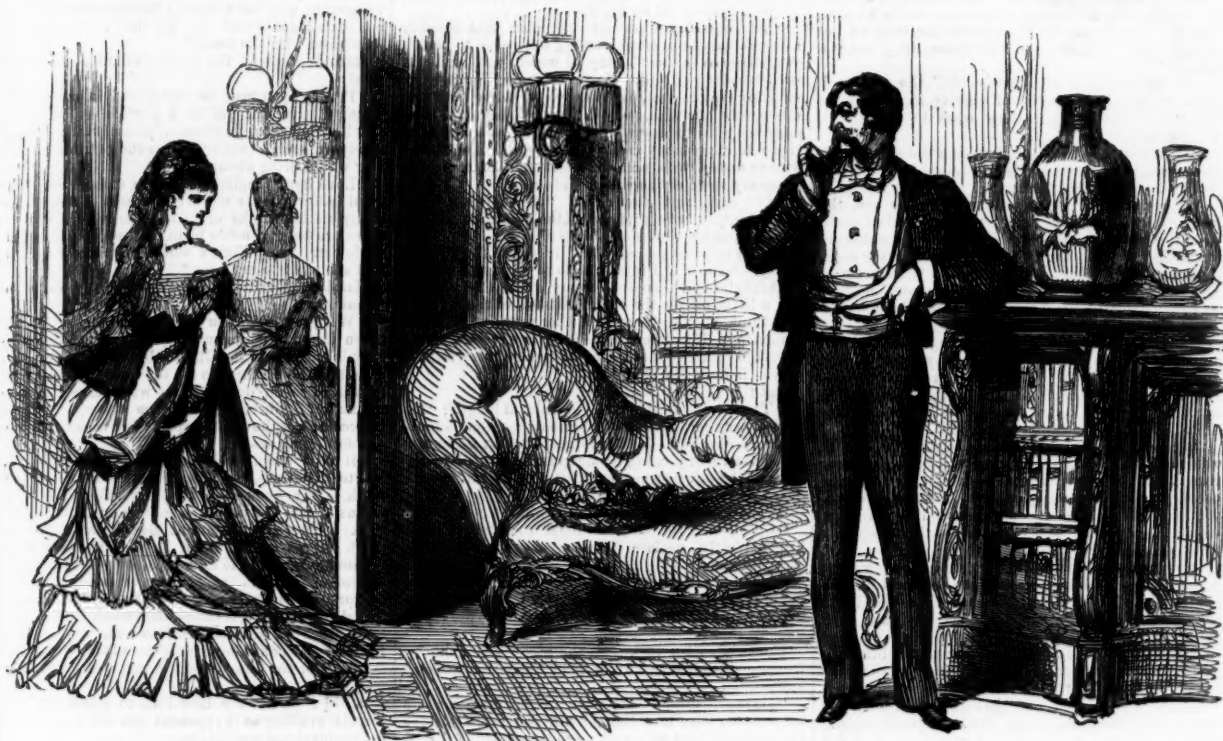
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[THE PRINCE RECEIVES A CHECK.]

ELGIVA; OR, THE GIPSY'S CURSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Snapt Link," "Evelyn's Plot," "Sybil's Inheritance," &c., &c.

CHAPTER V.

With laughter swimming in thine eye,
That told youth's heartfelt revelry,
And motion changeful as the wing
Of swallows wakened by the spring:
Thy image such in former time
When thou wert entering on thy prime.

The sun was shedding his bright rays over the gipsy camp the morning after the arrival of the unexpected guest at Chetwode Castle, albeit even in that sylvan scene the sleepers were still reposing under their primeval shelter.

All save one fair, bright girl, whose heart was too light for her slumbers to hang heavily on her young eyelids; she loved to roam among the woods and mountains like a bounding gazelle, sporting joyously in the fresh, exhilarating morning air.

Lena Farino silently passed the tents, which lay glittering in the sunshine amidst the green foliage with picturesque contrast, and glided out from the wood into the freer atmosphere of the hill side, which commanded a view of the castle, and many a wide acre beside, that formed the domain of the Earls of Chetwode, albeit that ancient title was obscured under the hereditary dignity of its present owner, Oscar, Count of Arnheim.

"How beautiful and stately it looks," she murmured to herself, "but how strange it must be always to live surrounded by those heavy walls—like a prison—away from the fresh, beautiful air and sounds and sights of the open country round."

Lena had taken off her large hat, and her bright Auburn hair glittered like burnished gold in the sunbeams, as it waved carelessly in the breeze that kissed and played with its graceful tresses.

Her eyes shone like the blue waters of the ocean in their dancing liquid light, and her whole features wore an air of fresh, childlike joy and innocence that is in itself a rare charm even where it is not embellished by the intrinsic beauty which the gipsy girl could boast.

"Would you indeed object to so splendid a shelter, fair maiden?" asked a voice near her that made her spring suddenly round, to meet the admiring gaze of one who she was sure was a stranger.

A man of some thirty, or perhaps rather fewer years of age—whose appearance certainly boasted a degree of nobility in his air and bearing, albeit the features were somewhat massive and form heavy in proportions—was standing almost within the shelter of the wood from which she had just emerged.

Lena remembered, with a rich scarlet blush springing to her cheek, that she had spoken aloud in the fulness of her heart and the fancied security of her solitude.

"I beg your pardon," she said, shrinking back from the stranger's approach. "I did not know that any one was near, or I should not have been so foolish."

And she would have passed on, but her companion, half involuntarily perhaps, impeded her passage.

"Nay; it is I who should apologize for intruding on your solitude, sweet maiden," he said; "but the wish to do so is irresistible when such fresh, spontaneous thought comes breathing like morning dew from the heart. So you do not envy the tenants of yon splendid mansion; you do not wish to change your life with that of its inhabitants, do you, sweet girl?"

Lena shook her head with a bewitching, half-shy archness.

"No; I should feel like a bird in a cage. I do not think I could breathe surrounded by those close walls. But I suppose some people do not mind it," she added, with a doubtful deliberation that fairly brought a laugh to her companion's lips.

"But you would not change places with the young Lady Elgiva? Is it so?" he resumed.

"No—at least I think not," she replied, "yet they say she loves the air and the woods, and to ride

on her beautiful horse as much as we should. I am so sorry for her," she added, meditatively.

"Have you never lived surrounded by close walls," as you call them?" asked the stranger, earnestly.

"Never," she replied, simply. "But Juan has and Amice too for a little time. I think it must be very strange, but they laughed at me when I pitied them and asked them if they were not so glad to escape into the tents again."

"Who are they—Juan and Amice?" asked the stranger.

"Amice is my cousin, my uncle Harold's daughter," she replied. "She is so beautiful and clever—not at all like a poor gipsy girl."

"And Juan—is he your lover?" was the next question; and the stranger's eyes were fixed sternly on the girl's face as he spoke.

"No; oh, no," she said, with a gay smile. "He is like my brother, though he is not one, and I love him dearly."

"Then Harold Farino is your uncle, is he, fair dame?" asked the gentleman. "Will you do an errand to him for me? I will not fail to deck my fair messenger with a fitting garland," he added, drawing from his little finger a ring that flashed and sparkled in the sunbeams.

But the girl drew back with a proud recoil that he could scarcely have believed she could assume.

"I will do your errand if it is a fitting one," she said, "but I cannot accept any reward for so simple a service. What is it you wish to be said to Harold Farino?"

"I would see him, and alone, which I suppose is impossible in your camp," he returned. "Can you bring him to me here, and at once? for I must return ere the usual hour of breakfast in yonder 'prison!'"

Lena raised her eyes slyly to the speaker's to see whether he was in earnest, and a vivid colour rose to her cheek at his meaning smile.

"I am sorry I was so foolish," she said, with a bewitching frankness. "Please tell me. Is it possible? Are you the Count Arnheim?"

"Scarcely, pretty one. I hope I do not look quite

venerable enough to be the father of Lady Elgiva," he returned, gravely. "Yet I suppose to your girlish eyes even my early manhood has the look of age. How old are you, *mignonne*?"

"I do not know," she said, simply. "I believe I am not so old as Amice, but I never could get uncle to tell me about either my parents or my birth. However I must not stay," she added, suddenly, some instinctive maidenly shyness coming over her as she caught his admiring gaze. "What am I to say to my uncle, sir?"

"Tell him that a friend from Germany, who once saved his life, requires his aid now; and that he will find him beneath yonder oak tree if he lose no time in obeying the summons. Stay; let that be a token, fair girl," he added, again pressing the ring on her acceptance. "Harold will recognize the jewel at a glance."

"I will convey it to my uncle, sir," the girl said, with a strange accession of dignity in her simple bearing; "and he will know what to do with it. Farewell."

She turned to retrace her steps, but the prince suddenly seized her hand in his and raised it to his lips with a half-careless gallantry.

"You must tell me my fortune, pretty one, the next time we meet," he said. "Yet methinks I could read this small palm as surely as you could guide me respecting my destiny. You have scarcely the dark, Eastern look in your face that should betoken gipsy descent. Well, well, I will not detain you," he said as she impatiently drew away her hand and in an instant disappeared from the spot.

The prince watched her retreating figure with a peculiar look in his thoughtful gray eyes, and he walked to the trying-place with a downcast, meditative air that changed the whole expression of his sarcastic features to a determined sternness that would brook no opposition to his will.

So completely was he absorbed in thought that he was not aware of the flight of time. He was roused from his reverie by the rapid approach of footsteps as they rattled the crisp leaves on the dry earth. And his whole face at once reverted to its usual cynical look as the new comer advanced to meet his greeting.

It was a man of some forty-five, perhaps a few more years of age, with unmistakable marks both in person and costume of his tribe and origin. Coal black eyes and hair, a complexion that might have been stained with walnut juice, so deeply brown was its hue, and limbs which still preserved all the litheness and elasticity of a roving life, all bespoke the wandering Bohemian, even if the romantic, Oriental costume, the tartan-like shawl that wrapped round him like a scarf, the Spanish cap, the loose small clothes, and gay-coloured waistcoat and stockings, had not indicated that wandering Eastern tribe of which the man was a distinguished chief.

He doffed his cap with a kind of sullen respect to the prince as he approached, though there was little of the subserviency in his bearing to which perhaps the German was accustomed in his own feudal land.

"Well, Harold, I suppose you scarcely expected a message from me in your English hiding-place," began the nobleman as he pointed to the trunk of a tree that afforded a convenient resting-place for his companion. "But it was extremely thoughtful of you to afford me so charming a herald of my presence. That's a lovely girl, fresh as the dewdrops, and as young as the morning—eh, Harold? Who is she? She was too reserved to let me into any of the secrets of her birth. I supposed she was your daughter at first, but she denied the impeachment."

"Lena is my niece, and under my protection, my lord," the man said, meaningly. "I presume you have more important business than idle questions about a gipsy girl that you required my presence."

"Tush, Harold; you are getting old," said the prince, cynically. "The day was when you would have considered beauty and love as the most important elements of a man's life."

"Only that 'love' can have nothing to do with an hungrily born girl where the Prince Charles of Mertz is in question," returned Harold, with the lofty air of one chieftain conversing with another rather than the obscure individual he affected. "Time is pressing, if you would not have our interview observed, prince. May I ask for what you wish for my assistance? I believe that was your message by my niece."

"Harkye, Harold," returned the prince, with a sudden change of manner, "you can scarcely have lost your memory so far as to forget the bonds that unite us. You can hardly have slept away the remembrance of the 10th of August, at Cologne, or the debt it entailed."

The gipsy drew himself up to his full height and gazed indignantly at his companion.

"Prince," he said, sternly, "I am of a houseless and despised race, but there is as pure and ancient

blood in my veins as in your own. You rendered me a service on that memorable night, but there are those bonds between us which made it a duty—ay, a sacred duty, prince," he added, pressing his fingers on the nobleman's white hand so as to leave the impress of a blood-red mark, which assumed a peculiar shape—almost like a Maltese Cross—on which the eyes of both rested with a reverent rather than astonished look. "Ah, you recognize it; that is well, prince," returned the gipsy. "Now we are on equal terms. I am bound to serve you, but rather as in honour and good faith than as a slave."

The nobleman had recovered himself now, and the usual sardonic smile that baffled more than the sternest passion sat on his lips.

"It is as well you should remember that there is as much danger in transgressing the rules to which you allude as in the slavery of which you stand in such wonderful dread. Harold Farino, I am your superior even in that, and you are bound to obey me. Come, man; be wise, and cut this matter short. I have more important interests to speak of and but brief space to express my meaning. Harold, I have come over to seek a wife, and you must support me in the necessary siege of the wilful bride-elect."

"I!" exclaimed the chief. "What can a poor, obscure gipsy have to do with the illustrious Prince Charles and his choice of a bride?"

"That remains to be seen," returned the prince, coolly. "Harold, I intend to take back the heiress of Arnheim and Chetwode as my wife. Can you not put a little oil on the chariot wheels of the lady, do you think, should she or her father prove restive and stubborn? If I am not mistaken you have some hold over the proud count that he would be very loth to defy. Is it so, Harold?"

But the gipsy did not at once reply. "The heiress of Arnheim!" he said, at length; "are you so very certain that her present position is incapable of change? Methinks there might be such a thing as an heir turning up and putting out the pretty nose of the fair usurper, even after many long years. What is your opinion, prince?"

The nobleman looked keenly at him. "Speak out, Harold; all these roundabout hints are perfectly useless between us and a needless waste of time."

"There has been such a thing as a man marrying again of far more advanced years than the count, and gaining an heir to his title and estates," was the reply. "Is not that possible, prince?"

Prince Charles turned on the gipsy with a heavy frown on his brow that made even Harold's imperious spirit quail.

"Harkye, Harold. It seems to me that you are intoxicated with this English air, and forget all the traditions of less wild and ungoverned lands. But, mind, there are eyes which watch and ears that listen even here. The vengeance of the Vehm-Gericht is as sure as it is terrible, let it fall ever so tardily or so late."

"Perhaps I know quite as much as yourself of the laws and the workings of our sacred guild, prince," replied the gipsy, calmly. "And I have inflicted it ere now on those who transgressed the oaths. But I defy you to prove that in the slightest degree I have merited your warning."

"You have, you have. It is insolence to your superior—indifference to his commands—of which I complain," exclaimed the prince, impatiently.

"And all because your sudden appearance and unexplained announcement were met by a timely caution. Prince, it would be unworthy of a woman to exhibit such petulance," said Harold, fiercely. "Now in your turn listen to me. The late Count Arnheim married the heiress of Chetwode against the wish of her sole remaining guardian, though the match was apparently a suitable and a splendid one. But the curse was on it, and the union became virtually childless. The heir was lost when barely three years had passed over its infant head, and no traces had ever been obtained of him up to this hour—previous to which catastrophe, as if to shadow forth the coming woe, the young countess gave birth to a female infant, who either never did breathe after she saw the light or gave up her tiny spirit ere she could even receive a name. Finally, prince, the mother died on the very day of her boy's disappearance, and Oscar, Count of Arnheim and Lord of Chetwode, retired to his German home, a lonely and desolate man, only to live a hermit's life and die a hermit's death. The inheritance passed to his cousin, the present count, only, as if to continue the ban, the sole child of his union was a girl, whose sex will do little to support the family honours or resist the evil fate of the doomed house."

Prince Charles had listened with a half-rapt, half-sardonic attention to the gipsy's harangue.

When he had finished he resumed, with a rather satisfied air:

"Then your sole objection is that I am in a measure

linking my fate with a banned race, good Harold. Fear not. I am content. The change of name, the absorption of interests will break the spell. Lady Elgiva of Arnheim will lose her identity when she becomes Princess Charles of Mertz."

"Suppose the missing heir appeared? Suppose he is not dead?" whispered the gipsy.

"There might be ways of dealing with him were such a contingency probable," returned the other. "But such an idea is madness. Twenty years have passed since the catastrophe. Every proof of identity must long ere this have been destroyed, even if the boy is living, and that surely is too wild an idea to be entertained. Those who abstracted him for vengeance will know how to finish their work. For one cannot doubt that the lad has long since been numbered with the dead."

Harold thought for a few minutes ere he replied:

"Perhaps you may be right, and in any case the young Elgiva will not be a portionless bride. Do you love her from your heart, prince, that you would disregard such a catastrophe as the return of the true heir would bring about?"

"Love her?" replied the prince, sneeringly. "My good fellow, that is scarcely the sort of thing a man in my station thinks of in his choice of a wife. If there are beauty, noble birth and wealth, it is quite sufficient. Lady Elgiva unites all these requisites, and she shall be my wife."

Harold thought gravely and silently for a few minutes.

"Well, my lord, you are not perhaps so far mistaken in your conjectures. In any case the young lady is entitled to the Chetwode property, even if a male heir should turn up for the paternal estates, and that is no mean dowry. But what have I to do in the matter? Surely your position is tempting enough to accomplish the arrangement of an alliance without any help from me."

"If so I should certainly not have troubled myself to come here," said the prince, coolly. "But the truth is, my good man, that my affairs are by no means in the prosperous condition you would imagine. The last season at Baden was rather too much for me, and in plain English my vast estates are no more available to me than to you, though it is a profound secret at present, thanks to a holy horror that I manage to inspire in my creditors and friends. However, it cannot last much longer, and I must use what engines I can to avert the mischief. I do not fear confiding in you," he added, with a bitter laugh, "for the simple reason that you dare not betray me."

"Still I do not see how I am to assist you," said Harold, evading as it appeared the chief subject of his companion's confidence.

"Simply by using your knowledge, my good fellow," was the reply. "The count would scarcely like an heir to stand up like a spectre before him; and there may be other secrets that would be even more inconvenient to be proclaimed which I doubt not you have the power to publish. I frankly confess I cannot exactly prove what I strongly suspect, but in any case I prefer rather appearing as a lover and a benefactor than a tyrant and executioner before my bride and her father."

"What will be my reward, my prince?" asked Harold, calmly.

"Oh, I would repay you in various ways. For instance, the little affair in which I shielded you should be cast into entire oblivion. Next I would introduce your son into the privileges and mysteries of the Vehm, and—"

"Unluckily I have no son, only a nephew and an only daughter," interrupted the gipsy, contemptuously. "I presume she could not be introduced to the holy bond."

"It would soon be ruined if a woman were in the case," laughed the prince, scornfully. "But what would be the difficulty of substituting this nephew? I suppose he is meant for the daughter—is it not so? or do you intend for his bride the pretty creature I just now met?"

The prince gave a quiet, penetrating look at the gipsy's dark features.

"That can signify little to you, prince. Suppose I do accept your offer for Juan? What then?" said the gipsy.

"Well, in the next place, your niece should be established in the Lady Elgiva's household," returned the prince, eagerly, "and her future cared for as if she were a sister rather than a dependent. Should the affair prove successful I would give your own daughter a dowry at her marriage, and enable you to retire in your old age from this wandering life to a comfortable home. Thus your every interest would be provided for, and your cares removed by my bounty."

"Prince," said the gipsy, firmly, "you know many things, but you are as ignorant of the feelings"

and instincts of my race as you are of the inclinations of the high-born girl whom you intend to wed. Do you comprehend the bondage you are preparing for the daughter of the woods and mountains, the misery that you would inflict on those whom you profess to benefit? However," he added, more gently, "I daresay you mean well, and I will not altogether reject your offer without consideration. To-morrow at this hour if you will meet me here I will give you my final decision both as to my assistance and my recompense. Now I must return, for even I in my lawless life have rules and duties I cannot transgress with impunity."

"The castle bell is striking eight, so it will behave me to return from my early walk," laughed the prince, scornfully. "Then in the morning soon after daybreak I will be at the trysting-place, and if you are wise we will sign at once our compact."

And, with a careless, haughty nod, he walked away. Harold looked after him with a bitter laugh.

"Idiot—haughty idiot," he said. "He thinks he is pulling the string that binds his slave, while he is but the puppet to my will. Yes, I must think—I must think. His terms are hateful as he intends them, yet they may suit my purposes even in their degrading bondage. Lena has a more determined spirit even than Amice, and it will be well for her to be removed from the companionship of her cousins and to learn patience and obedience in servitude, or—"

He did not speak the last word.

Perhaps he shrank from the very utterance of the idea that was in his secret breast, perhaps he feared even the birds that hovered near him in their joyous innocence. Without farther monologue or hesitation he walked from the spot, and joined the camp just as the smoking camp kettles were being removed from the fire and the dark figures of the men were lying or sitting in primitive fashion on the ground in readiness for the morning meal.

CHAPTER VI.

The iron may enter in and pierce thy soul,
But cannot kill the love within thee burning;
The tears of misery, thy bitter dole.

Can never quench thy true heart's fierce yearning.

Till hate be cherished where love was enthroned.

"AMICE, Amice, where can you have been all this long morning? I have been looking everywhere for you," exclaimed Juan as he suddenly encountered the young daughter of the gipsy chief lifting the veil of the tent which was especially devoted to her and Lena.

"Everywhere but in my proper home," said the girl, haughtily, looking up from a beautiful bit of embroidery she was tracing on a scarlet cloth. "I am not such a wanderer as Lena; she goes alone, unaccompanied by one of the tribe, not even by you, Juan."

The youthful girl gave a quick, jealous glance at the youth's face as she mentioned her dreaded cousin's name.

She was lovely in her peculiar style, which was one that was rarely seen among the gipsy tribe—a colourless skin that even exposure to the sun's rays could not tan from its purity; features that were classically correct, if too changeless in their outline; and a tall, graceful figure, which needed no modern toilet to display its perfection, no guidance to develop its elegance; and eyes that were beautiful in form and colour, though somewhat hard and fierce in their expression.

Such was the fair creature's portrait to whom Juan was in such close and, as most would consider, enviable contact.

"Nay, Amice, that is not like you to cast a frown on our Lena," he said, reproachfully, as he threw himself at the girl's feet in a graceful attitude, which an artist would have eagerly sketched. "You are too generous for such injustice."

"And you strangely partial, Juan," she resumed, placing her small hand on his arm. "Once you would desert Lena's wild rambles to gather flowers or sing with Amice. Now it is different; you avoid—your slight me, Juan, and I will not bear it," she continued, stamping her small sandalled foot indignantly as she spoke.

"You are wrong, dear Amice. It is only that we are all getting older. I am more in the company of the men of our tribe; and your father I fancy looks gloomily when I am near you. Surely I cannot ever forget or slight my foster-sister—my boyhood's play-fellow," he said, with a graceful plucking in his look and attitude that might have graced a drawing-room rather than a gipsy's tent. "If I have seemed to do so, forgive me, dear Amice," he added, striving to pass his arm round the girl's slender waist.

But she haughtily shrunk from him.

"No, no, Juan; I have more fiery blood in my veins than Lena, and I cannot be satisfied with such poor, divided love. There must be either love or hate between us. Either I will be all or nothing."

"Amice, you are ill—excited," said the young man, pleadingly. "It is but yesterday we sat on your copse, watching the gay cavalcade move on to the castle as they returned from their ride, and you were wondering how you would feel on that high-bred horse who carried one of the maidens so swiftly. You thought not of such torturing fancies then. Dismiss them, dear Amice, and come into the glad sunlight and air with me; their brightness will chase the gloom from your heart."

"Never!" replied the girl; "never, unless you tell me the truth, Juan. Is there any one you love better than you do me? I mean Lena, or any other. Nay, I will know," she said, springing up impetuously, and standing before him with her graceful figure drawn up and her eyes flashing like fiery coals, while a deep vermilion spot glowed on either pure cheek.

"Amice, for Heaven's sake do not look like that!" exclaimed the young man, in alarm. "I declare to you that Lena is but as a dear sister to me; so thought of aught else ever crossed her mind or mine. Amice may well defy any rivals," he added. "You are so lovely I do not believe the young lady at the castle can be so beautiful as you are, or more proud and noble," he added as he watched the softening of the blaze in the girl's flashing eyes.

"Oh, if I were—if I were but like her you would love me—worship me then, Juan!" she said, with almost piteous passion in her accents. "You would be proud to have one look—one word from Amice, the great lady."

"Not more than from Amice, my dear gipsy cousin," he said, half laughing. "Besides, if I were but a poor wanderer then, and you a great lady, I should not have the chance you know, Amice. So we are better as it is," he added, trying to lead her from the tent into the free, sweet air, that he thought would soon vanish the strange fever of the girl's brain.

"No, no, Juan; I am not ill or jesting," she said, eagerly. "But the fit is on me, and I will know the truth. Shall I tell you," she continued, "what old Mother Nell told me but a few days since? She had the spirit on her she declared, and she read my hand as she never did before. She warned me that love and wealth warred in my future, and that I should be miserable if I got my dearest wish. Juan, I can never be unhappy if you love me as you used to say you did; and I should die, or cause the death of others even more dear to me than myself, if you ever desert me or love another. Juan, Juan, promise me that you will never drive me to such desperation by your treachery!"

The girl was lovely beyond compare at that moment.

Her glowing cheeks looked like painted alabaster, her eyes shone like liquid fire, and her lovely lips were just parted sufficiently to show perfect and pearly teeth between their coral.

It was impossible for a man—especially at the age of inexperience to which Juan had arrived—to resist such uncontrolled tenderness, such pleading agony in one so lovely and proud.

"Amice, dearest, do not speak so cruelly. It would break my heart if I lost you; I could never find your equal in all things," he went on, a strange weight at his heart restraining the words that trembled on his tongue and a presentiment of coming evil chilling his very heart.

"Are you sure—very sure, Juan? Do not deceive me, for all our sakes," she said, gazing up into his face. "You know not—you cannot guess the madness that it might work—the evil and the sin which you would cause if you were false. Oh, Juan, no one can ever love you as I do, who from my very first breath have lived at your side, and found all my happiness in your voice, your smile, your love."

With a sudden wild fervour that rather terrified than flattered its object, the girl threw her arms round the youth's neck and pressed her lips on his with a momentary, half-frenzied embrace.

There could be no question now.

Juan was committed to his pledge, even while shrieking from the bonds he assumed. But his arms encircled her light form, and his heart responded to the pulsations of hers, though its throbings were rather those of gratified vanity and tumultuous agitation than the pulses of youthful love and hope.

Prince Charles had performed his morning toilet and appeared in the breakfast-room ere his host had taken his usual place at the well-covered table on the morning of his interview with the gipsy.

"Ah, count, I feared I was late, but I see I have not kept my fair hostess waiting," he said, glancing round the apartment of which the count was the sole tenant.

"Yes, Elgiva is late this morning, and her friend is like her shadow, and never appears alone," returned the host, with a slight irritability in his tone.

"It is a very unusual omission on her part, I must confess, but one of which I shall require an account," he went on, lashing himself as it appeared with a kind of indignant passion, to which he had been unusually liable since his guest's arrival.

"Pray do not," began the prince, but ere he could finish his sentence the door opened, and Elgiva, bright and lovely as a youthful sultana, though with a slight tremor in her mien that betrayed some unusual agitation to the sharp eyes of her suitor.

"I am sorry I am late, papa," she said, kissing her father's contracted brow, from which even the soft caress did not banish the frown, "but poor Gretchen is so unwell this morning—I am afraid she is going to be ill. I had to dispense with her services," she went on, with a gay smile; "and, like other helpless beings, I found it very awkward to complete my own toilet, more especially my unmanageable hair," she added, shaking back a rich curl that escaped from its confinement, as if to prove the beauty of such careless grace.

"Is there really no servant in the household who could wait on you, Elgiva?" asked the count, sharply. "There must surely be some terrible mismanagement for such to be the case. I shall speak to Mrs. Oliver at once," he added, severely.

"Pray do not, papa. I do so dislike having those ladies'-maids by profession about me," exclaimed the young lady, eagerly. "Gretchen is just perfection," she went on, gaily. "She can perform all her duties without making me feel I am in a prison with a severe duenna watching my every whim and caprice. You know what a wilful creature I am, do you not, *caro padre*?" she continued, "quite beyond all conventional rules for young ladies of position, as Madame Dupont always assured me."

"Then pray what do you intend, wild girl?" said the count, reassured perhaps by the admiring glances of his guest. "Are you going to keep us waiting and appear in questionable toilet every day because this maid of yours is ill? I really cannot consent to such nonsense."

"Should I be considered very presumptuous if I made a suggestion?" interposed the prince, blandly. "In truth, count, I was going to plead with you and your fair daughter on behalf of a *protégée* of mine, even if this *contretemps* had not taken place. The fact is that I met accidentally with a man whom I knew some years since, and, being embarrassed with the charge of a young orphan girl, his niece, he would be most thankful to obtain for her even a temporary asylum under such auspices. Perhaps she might not annoy Lady Elgiva so much as the professional *soubrettes*. She is a complete child of the woods and mountains, yet gentle and graceful in her ways for one so untutored, and I think—nay, I am sure—she would win her young lady's heart if she were honoured by entering into her service for the emergency."

"Certainly, certainly, prince; a request from you will ever be granted ere it is explained," said the count, hurriedly forestalling his daughter's reply. "Where shall we send for this extremely desirable young person? No time should be lost under the circumstances."

"I will make arrangements without delay, my dear count, to communicate with the gipsy uncle," returned the prince. "To-morrow I can promise for her appearance, always supposing that Lady Elgiva will excuse for the moment a rather peculiar style of dress; but, as I before said, she rather affects the picturesque, and it must be confessed she knows what is most becoming to her own rather romantic features. And the fault can very quickly be amended by the help of a little money and skill I presume."

"Perhaps I may not require the girl at all," said Elgiva, with unusual acerbity in her tone. "It is not certain that my poor Gretchen's illness will prove serious, and I should not dream of supplying her place till I was sure she would be laid aside," she added, determinately.

"That is nothing to the purpose," interrupted the count, sternly. "I should hope that there is place in my household for any additional domestics that I may see fit to place there. The matter is arranged, prince, if you will take the trouble to convey the tidings to your *protégée*. Elgiva, you will desire Mrs. Oliver to give the necessary orders for her reception."

And the count took up a newspaper and began to comment on its contents, as if to close the subject.

"Elgiva, this is intolerable," exclaimed the young Mabel as the girls left the breakfast-room some brief space after. "Are you to have the choice of your personal attendant literally forced down your throat without permission to say a word in your own defence? If I were heiress of Arubheim I would rebel against such tyranny."

"And if I were Mabel Harcourt I daresay I should do the same," replied Elgiva, with a forced smile. "But it is only for a short time, Mabel, that this

insolent foreigner will remain here," she went on. "I suppose it is the old feudal ideas of German nobles that give my father such strange submission to his imperiousness. You know he was or rather his family were reigning princes till the change in German affairs deprived them of the empty dignity which would be ludicrous in English, yet you may imagine—"

"Is it ludicrous in your eyes, fair lady?" said a voice at her elbow, and, glancing hastily round, Elgiva perceived the prince at her side.

"Excuse me, prince," she said, haughtily, "if I request that my steps may not be dogged and my conversation with my friends overheard in my own house. That certainly passes the bounds of the courtesy I owe to my father's guests, which I of course desire to preserve."

"Do not do yourself and me such injustice, Lady Elgiva," said the prince; "it was a pure accident that I overtook you at the moment when you so flatteringly discussed my prospects and antecedents. See, here is the proof of my assertion," he added, holding up a curiously worked chain, from which depended an Oriental charm. "You dropped this during your hasty flight, and I, perceiving its mystic value, hastened after you to restore it. Am I forgiven?" he added, humbly.

Lady Elgiva bowed her head coldly as she received the trinket, and passed on without a reply to her own apartments.

The prince gazed after her with a bitter smile. "I am neither forgiven nor forgiving," he muttered, "as she will find to her cost."

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE NUMBER OF EGGS FROM A HEN.—A German naturalist answers the question, how many eggs a hen can possibly lay, as follows: The ovary of a hen contains about six hundred embryo eggs, of which in the first year not more than twenty are matured. The second year produces one hundred and twenty, the third one hundred and thirty-five, the fourth one hundred and fourteen, and in the following four years the number decreases by twenty yearly. In the ninth year only ten eggs can be expected; thus it appears that after the first four years hens cease to be profitable as layers.

LIQUID LENSES.—A lecture experiment adopted by Professor Henry Morton illustrates very forcibly the action of refraction. A magic lantern is arranged vertically in connection with suitable mirrors to throw the image upon the screen. An empty watch-glass is substituted for the usual objective lens. If now we introduce an object, as, for example, a photograph on glass, of course no image will be produced on the screen, but only a nebulous patch of light. On pouring water into the watch-glass, however, a well-defined image is produced. On replacing the water by alcohol, muriate of tin, or other more highly refracting liquid, a lens of higher power is obtained.

INFLUENCE OF VARIOUSLY COLOURED LIGHT ON VEGETATION.—As the result of a series of experiments upon the influence of variously coloured light upon vegetation, Dr. Bert has arrived at the following conclusions: 1. That green light is almost as fatal to vegetation as darkness. 2. That red light is very detrimental to plants, though in a less degree than green light. 3. That though yellow light is far less detrimental than the preceding, it is more injurious than blue light. 4. That all the colours taken singly are injurious to plants, and that their union in the proportion to form white light is necessary for healthy growth. This does not agree with the ideas of the Commissioner of Patents, who has granted a patent to Pleasanton for the use of blue glass as an improvement in the cultivation of plants.

FERMENT FUNGI.

Dr. Engel, of Strasburg, has ascertained that alcoholic fermentation is accompanied by the development of two different genera of fungus plants, while that of fruits embraces four kinds. These latter ferments are found almost always on the surface of the fruit, where they remain in a latent condition without development. When, however, the epidermis becomes cracked, or when the stem of the fruit is separated, the ferment (or its pores) comes into contact with the saccharine juices, and the ferment is then reproduced, but always in the form of ferment, and never in that of mould. Engel maintains that the alcoholic ferment exists in nature, although the fact has been denied by others. Thus as long as a cherry is intact it has a particular savour; when, however, the stem is detached or the epidermis is cracked, the cherry not only changes its colour but assumes a vinous taste, and exhibits a large number of fermented cells.

He also remarks that the ferment of bread is of a

different species from the yeast of beer, and that he has never been able to germinate the spores of ferments in vegetables, which contained but little sugar, or none at all; but that as soon as they come in contact with saccharine liquid they germinate or reproduce the ferment.

CHANGES OF CLIMATE.

THE question whether the climate of different countries has changed since historical times can only be answered with certainty when we shall have collected correct meteorological observations of several centuries. It is well known, however, that the invention of the thermometer was only made in comparatively recent times, and that only since the latter part of the last century regular observations have been commenced in regard to the temperature of different localities.

Glaisher, however, claims already to be able to determine, by the observations made in England, that a gradual rise of the mean temperature is taking place here. He finds, indeed, that from 1770 to 1800, the mean temperature of the year was 8.72 deg. Centigrade; 1800 to 1829, 9.17 deg.; 1830 to 1860, 9.44 deg. According to Dove, the yearly mean temperature of Berlin, Prussia, from 1848 to 1865, differs only one-hundredth of a degree from that of the 137 years before that time.

According to Professor Loomis, the mean temperature of New Haven (U.S.) was, from 1778 till 1820, 7.60 deg. C. and from 1830 to 1865 only 7.52 deg. C., showing a gradual cooling.

Such results are, however, by no means reliable, because it cannot be proved that the instruments used during the different periods agreed exactly; and they may have been placed in different circumstances.

If, therefore, we wish at the present day to decide if any changes have taken place in the climate during, say, twenty centuries, nothing is left but to inquire if changes have taken place in the flora and fauna of the country in question.

The fossil remains of plants and animals show the most enormous changes since geological times; indeed, changes so great as to make a climate, once tropical, at present temperate, or even polar. And this suggests the question of slighter changes visible in modifications in the flora.

From the fact that in Palestine at the present day the vine and the date palm tree are cultivated one next to the other, as we know was the case 3,300 years ago, Arago concludes that the climate there cannot have changed at all during that period. If ever during that period the mean temperature had risen a few degrees the cultivation of the vine would at once have ceased; if on the other hand the mean temperature had descended a few degrees the date palm trees would all have come to an untimely end.

For similar reasons Arago holds that the climate of Egypt, Greece, and Italy has not changed, while Biot proved the same for China, deducing it from the study of the Chinese records, which are very complete in regard to the condition of that country during past centuries.

In the meantime it appears that several other countries show a decrease of temperature. For it is proved that in many regions of France and Germany the vine was cultivated many centuries ago where now it has been abandoned, for reason that the grapes do not attain full maturity. However, we do not consider this an argument, as the abandonment of this culture, in localities not well adapted and which produced only sour wines, is not to be wondered at when, by the improvement in intercommunication, it became more economical to obtain good wines from elsewhere than to make poor wines at home.

In the Alpine region, however, there are many facts which point to a gradual descent of temperature and deterioration of the climate. So it has been proved that in the former centuries the Alpine glaciers were less extensive than at present. In the second half of the sixteenth century people went to church from Wallis to Grindelwald along a road which at present is entirely covered with ice. A chapel which is marked on Schöpflin's map in 1570 was destroyed by the glaciers in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and its place is now covered by a glacier. The bell from this chapel, with the year of its manufacture cast in it, namely 1044, is to the present day preserved in Grindelwald.

At Gubhunen, in the Haasi Thal, hemp used to be cultivated; this is at the present day, by reason of the early snow falls, utterly impossible.

Formerly the Engatten Alp was covered with cattle from the 21st of June; since the beginning of this century it is not possible to take possession before July, while the retreat in the autumn must also be made some eight or ten days earlier.

There is also no doubt but that the upper limits of the mountain forests are many hundreds of feet lower than formerly; as, high above the present limits where all forest growth is at present arrested, there

are found the remains of old forests, dead trunks, enormous roots and other relics, witnessing a prior very vigorous vegetation.

It is evident that such changes must be the result of a lowering of the mean temperature of the country in general, so that, so far as concerns these mountain regions, a gradual cooling appears actually to be taking place.

SUMMER HEATS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

FOR the benefit of our readers who have suffered under the effects of the recent heat we publish the following, collected from various sources, relative to the extreme summer temperature of the different countries of the world:

Thibet, situated in Central Asia, between the thirtieth and thirty-eighth parallels of north latitude, is a decidedly hot country—so hot, indeed, that even the fiercest heat which the firemen in a sea-going steamer have to endure is comparatively insignificant beside its midsummer temperature. The intense heat, reaching 150 deg., doubtless prevents the inhabitants of the above-mentioned country remaining either in their houses or in their garments during the day, but such is the inconstancy of the weather that if they venture to remain out doors or continue in their primitive costume throughout the night they may possibly be frozen to death before morning.

Senegal in Africa and the island of Guadeloupe in the West Indies are next to Thibet in summer heat; the weather is variable, but often reaches a temperature of 130 deg. Still more changeable is the climate of the Great Desert of Sahara, where the thermometer, after rising to 130 deg. during the day, at nightfall descends to among the fifties. In Persia fearful plagues and pestilences are bred by an atmosphere heated to 125 deg. At Calcutta and on the Delta of the Ganges, points from which the Asiatic cholera is said to begin its western march, the mercury rises to 120 deg.

In the jungles of Afghanistan and in the deserts of Egypt 110 deg. is the maximum. Strange to say, the same high temperature is reached in some of the interior valleys of California, although the average of the surrounding country is much lower. At Cape Colony, the diamond diggings in Africa, and in some parts of Utah Territory, the midsummer heat is 105 deg. This is next greatest in Greece, reaching 104 deg.; then comes Arabia 103 deg., the arid deserts of that country being much less heated than the vast expanse of Sahara. Now follows a strange anomaly; it will hardly be credited that in Canada the inhabitants experience such a temperature, but it is nevertheless a fact that at Montreal the extreme summer heat is often as high as that of the deserts of Arabia, both being 103 deg.

New York is not far behind, its summer limit being 102 deg. Spain, Upper India, Canton, China, and the island of Jamaica average 100 deg. With the exception of New York, 98 deg. is the highest range in the Northern States. The island of Mauritius is next on the list, having a summer temperature of 96 deg.; then come Sierra Leone in Africa and Guiana in South America, both 94 deg.; then Ceylon, 92 deg. Throughout France, in St. Petersburg (Russia), Denmark, Belgium, Barmah, Shanghai in China, Penang, the Sandwich Islands, Buenos Ayres, and the islands of Bourbon and Trinidad, the average is 90 deg. That of Nova Scotia and the majority of the Azores Islands is 87 deg. England, Ireland, Sicily, Siam, and Peru in summer are of about the same temperature, not exceeding 85 deg. Peking in China, Portugal, and Natal Colony in Africa all have mild summers, 80 deg. being the extreme. In Siberia 77 deg. is the limit. In Western and Southern Australia and the eastern and western parts of Scotland the temperature does not rise above 75 deg. In Italy, Venezuela, and Madeira 73 deg. is the maximum.

The thermometer in Prussia, Victoria Land, and New Zealand rarely rises above 70 deg.; in New South Wales not above 68 deg., nor, in Switzerland and Hungary, above 66 deg. Colder still are the summers in Bavaria, Sweden, Northern Siberia, Tasmania, and Moscow, in Russia, where 65 deg. is the extreme limit. Norway, Greenland, and Newfoundland have no weather warmer than 60 deg.; 55 deg. is the maximum for Central Scotland, the Orkney Isles, Patagonia, and the Falkland Islands; and, finally, amid the ice and snow of the arctic regions, the heat of midsummer is below 50 deg.

Iceland, however, is colder still. The northern portions of that country virtually have no summer; on its southern shores, which are swept by the Gulf Stream, the temperature sometimes rises to 45 deg. Last comes Nova Zembla, bleakest and most inhospitable of islands, lying frozen in the Arctic Ocean, on the confines of Northern Asia. It can be truly said that in that country there is no summer; for even in these midsummer days, while we suffer under the intense heat, there the mercury fails to rise beyond 34 deg.—two degrees above the freezing-point—and this is the very extreme of temperature.



MARIGOLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Image in the Heart," "Sweet Egmontine,"
 "The Three Passions," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Evil: Why looks your grace so heavily
 to-day?

Clara: Oh, I have passed a miserable night;
 So full of sights—of ghastly dreams,
 That, as I am a Christian, faithful man,
 I would not spend another such a night
 Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days,
 So full of dismal terror was the time.

Shakespeare.

SWIFTLY Marigold gilded along a secluded path,
 with the intricacies of which she seemed perfectly
 well acquainted.

At times her slender and visionary form was lost
 in the tenebrous shadows of the overhanging trees,
 but Captain Anglesey and Wilfred Marshall never
 found themselves at fault as they heard her hurried
 breathing or the rustling of her dress even when they
 could not see her.

"Do you think that she has found her child?"
 asked Anglesey, "and that when she makes these
 strange journeys she goes to see it?"

"I fancy that she goes to see some child which
 she fancies to be hers. Whether it is or not I will
 not pretend to say," replied Wilfred Marshall.

"We shall soon discover the mystery for our-
 selves," exclaimed the captain, "and I shall not be
 sorry, for, to tell you the truth, her singular and
 mysterious wanderings lately have occasioned me
 much distress."

"Did I tell you that Lord Kimbolton has obtained
 a divorce from his wife—from your wife I may say?"
 continued Marshall.

"No," replied Anglesey. "But I was aware of the
 fact, as I have been served with a citation and re-
 ceived notice that I have to pay the costs of the suit.
 I am surprised that he should have taken this step
 because he declared that he would not have his pri-
 vate affairs dragged before the public."

"He has a motive," replied Marshall.
 "Ah, that's different. Does he intend to marry
 again?"

"He does. The young and beautiful widow of the
 late Earl of Cairnstay has accepted him, and they
 are to be married shortly. It is said that he means to
 lead a very gay life. I know that he has bought
 race horses. He goes everywhere, and is well re-
 ceived in London."

"Oh," said Anglesey, "as to that, a man has only

[THE RESCUE.]

to be treated badly by his wife and all the fashion-
 able world makes a lion of him."

"Yes," replied Wilfred Marshall, "but he is equally
 well received if the case is different. If a man be-
 comes ill to his wife he is a notoriety at once. The
 divorce court in these days confers distinction upon
 people who go into it."

"It ought not to be so," answered the captain. "I
 shall follow Kimbolton's example. I too shall seek
 excitement. But I shall go into trade. I have al-
 ready made arrangements for the purchase of a mer-
 chant's business in Bristol, and—"

"You will make money at it. A man has only to
 be disappointed in life and embittered against the
 world to go savagely in for trade and make his for-
 tune."

A faint smile rose to Captain Anglesey's lips. He
 was about to make some reply when a light gleamed
 before them and they saw a cottage at a few yards' distance.

Marigold knocked at the door, which was opened
 to her, and after she had entered it closed immedi-
 ately.

Captain Anglesey and Marshall approached the
 window, and looked in through a corner which was not
 protected by the blind, the latter being only partially
 drawn down.

The cottage was that of Hardy, the labourer.

In a cradle lay the little child which the masked
 men had brought to him in the middle of the stormy
 night.

He shook Marigold by the hand with the affection
 of a father, and she sat down by the baby and began
 to rock the cradle.

"I am late to-night," she said, "and I keep you
 up, Mr. Hardy, but you know that my only pleasure
 in life now is to nurse this darling, who so much re-
 sembles the pet that I lost."

"I wish, my dear lady, that my poor child had a
 mother's love and care. It was deprived of both soon
 after its birth," answered Hardy.

"It was indeed a blessed day when my wander-
 ing footsteps led me to your cottage to ask for a
 glass of water," exclaimed Marigold.

"I remember," said the old man, "when I came
 home from my work I found you sitting just as you are
 now, rocking the cradle; and you are welcome to do
 it, my dear, as long as you like."

This conversation was audible to the men who were
 listening, and Wilfred Marshall whispered to his com-
 panion:

"Let us go inside and ask this man where the child
 came from. It may not be his. Are there any marks
 by which you can distinguish your infant?"

"No," replied Captain Anglesey; "I heard of
 none."

"Never mind; enter with me," continued Marshall.
 As he spoke he advanced and opened the door, which
 was only latched.

As they entered, Hardy sprang to his feet and
 looked defiantly at them, while Marigold uttered a
 piercing shriek, and, seizing the baby, held it in her
 arms as if fearful that they were going to take it
 from her.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Hardy, "this is my cot-
 tage, and, if humble, it is still my home. Why do
 you come in at this time of night without asking per-
 mission?"

"Simply," replied Captain Anglesey, "because I
 have followed my wife, who, unhappily, is a lady of
 weak intellect."

"Is this lady your wife?" he asked, pointing to
 Marigold.

"She is. You seem to be on friendly terms with
 her and to know her story. Now I want to ask you
 where you got that child?"

"It is my own, sir," replied Hardy, respectfully;
 "and you would pity me if you knew my history. My
 wife died in her confinement a year after marriage,
 and that little innocent is the only pledge of her af-
 fection that I have left."

"Can you prove this?"

"All my neighbours know what I have told you
 to be the truth."

"My child," said Captain Anglesey, "was stolen,
 and as the baby which my wife now holds in her
 hands bears a strong resemblance to the lost one I
 shall require you to prove all that you say."

"That I am ready to do," said Hardy, whose voice
 trembled slightly.

Marigold walked up and down, kissing the child
 and calling it her darling.

Wilfred Marshall, being a lawyer, thought that
 his experience and legal knowledge might have some
 effect upon the man and induce him to confess if he
 had done anything wrong, and he exclaimed:

"We have reason to believe that this child has
 been stolen. The law is very clear as to the actual
 thief and the receiver, but we have no wish to deal
 harshly with you; confess that you were made a tool
 of by others and we will not prosecute you."

"I know nothing about what you are saying," re-
 plied Hardy, stolidly.

"Very well; we shall see. You will have to prove
 your case in a court of law."

"Nay, man," Hardy said, "that's for you to do. I
 am safe enough, since I claim the child as my own
 flesh and blood."

Meantime Marigold had approached Captain Anglesey and said, in a whining tone:

"Do not take my child from me again, Frank. I will keep it here with this good man out of your sight. Please let me have it all to myself."

Captain Anglesey was about to make some reassuring reply when the door was nearly burst open, and six wild, swarthy-looking men broke into the room.

Three of them, armed with thick, heavy sticks, seized Hardy, Wilfred Marshall, and Captain Anglesey, holding them in a vice-like grasp.

A fourth snatched the child from Marigold, who fell fainting on the floor.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" cried Captain Anglesey.

"That is our business," answered the foremost gipsy; "when we are employed we do our duty."

The man who had the child in his arms having gone outside the others released their prisoners and at once departed, threatening a severe vengeance if they were followed.

The whole affair did not occupy five minutes, and Captain Anglesey was as much surprised as was Hardy himself.

That the latter had no participation in the kidnapping was as clear as daylight, for he evinced a sincere grief at the loss of the child, to which he was already becoming tenderly attached. It had taken the place of his own in his heart.

Touching Captain Anglesey on the shoulder, he said:

"Go. There is a curse on that child, which clings to all connected with it."

"What do you mean?" asked the captain, aghast.

"I scarcely know myself, but I fear it is the child of sin and shame."

"It is not yours, then, as you asserted just now," said Wilfred Marshall.

"It is not. He who brought it here has taken it away. More I cannot tell you. Leave me. I am a poor, broken-down man, and I wish not to be mixed up in gentlefolk's matters."

Captain Anglesey turned to Marshall and said:

"If it is as I suspect, Kimbolton has taken the alarm. His spies have apprized him of Marigold's visits to this cottage, and he has hired the gipsies to steal and take it perhaps to some foreign land. We are too late—too late!"

It was some time before Marigold had sufficiently recovered to be able to walk home.

Her grief was intense, and in the bewildered state of her mind she fancied that the captain had again taken her child from her.

It was a weary journey home.

Anglesey was forced to admit that the enmity of Lord Kimbolton was sleepless.

If, as he suspected, the infant was his child, what would its future be amongst gipsies and strollers?

He shuddered to think of it.

On the following day he and Marshall again sought the cottage near the wood, but to their surprise it was burnt to the ground.

Nothing remained of it but a heap of ashes, and Hardy had gone off on the tramp, no one knew whither.

Marigold's paroxysms became more violent, but she was a little appeased by the following circumstances:

A sister of Captain Anglesey died a widow, leaving one child, a boy named Ralph, who was about a year old. With her dying breath she committed this child to her brother's care, who accepted the charge. Poor, demented Marigold, wanting something to love, took a fancy to the child, and, though her intellect was never very clear, she at times showed gleams of intelligence when with the boy.

Captain Anglesey went to Bristol and back every day. He had established an office there and was a shipowner.

His business prospered. Money he did not care for, and therefore it came to him in thousands. He simply wanted work to occupy his mind.

One day Wilfred Marshall, who had been to Marseilles for him on a matter in dispute with a merchant there, returned.

"I have news for you, Frank," he said. "Your merchant, Auguste Chabot, is a prince, and he has a pretty daughter. He is old, and the girl likes me."

"Marry her, and may you be happy," replied Anglesey.

"I intend to do so. Chabot wishes it. He will give me his business, but I am to take his name, and in future I shall be known as Marshal Chabot, the merchant of Marseilles."

"We will be friends still, though the seas separate us. Heaven bless you, Marshall. I owe you much," answered Anglesey.

The friends shook hands and parted, not to meet again for many years.

Captain Anglesey was very successful in trade, so

was Marshal Chabot. They became merchant princes.

Marigold passed a calm but half-unconscious existence with her adopted child.

Lord Kimbolton became desperately gay in London, and lost large sums of money on the turf.

The issue of his second marriage with the earl's widow was a boy, to whom he was passionately attached.

This boy, the Honourable Arthur Everton, was sent to Eton, and became the hope of the house of Kimbolton.

And now, as we have followed the fortunes of the fathers and mothers of the children, we must pursue those of the children themselves as they grow up.

If the adventures of the parents were startling those of the children will be found to be still more extraordinary.

There was a blight on the career of Frank Anglesey and Marigold which extended its evil influence to many others, as a stone thrown into a sheet of still water produces endless circles, which are constantly enlarging.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have taken away this old man's daughter is
most true.

EIGHTEEN years have elapsed.
People speak of the house of Anglesey and Co., of Bristol, as one speaks of Rothschild, or any other well-known millionaire.

People say that Marshal Chabot, the merchant prince of Marseilles, a widower with an only daughter, can give the girl nearly as much money as the Bank of England holds in reserve.

People speak of Lord Kimbolton as a ruined man, a gambler, one who has race horses but preserves very little fortune, still less reputation.

They speak also of his son, the Honourable Arthur Everton, a lieutenant in the navy, as a gentleman who has a love of his profession and little sympathy with his father's pursuits.

Eighteen years have come and gone since we last saw the personages connected with our story. Let us draw up the curtain again, this time at the bustling seaport town of Marseilles, in the south of France.

It was the month of September, and about seven o'clock in the evening. Three parts of the population of Marseilles walked upon the long parade, watching the sea lave the sandy beach in a listless manner.

All day long an almost tropical sun had inundated the city with a shower of fire. To this succeeded a pleasant temperature, of which every one hastened to take advantage.

In the midst of the crowd was a young man, about eighteen years old, who had the unmistakable appearance of a British naval officer, though he was not in uniform.

He was tall and handsome, though a little pale, as if he had been suffering from recent illness. There was a distinguished air about him, which stamped him at the first glance as a gentleman.

Completely isolated in the crowd, he neither bowed nor addressed a word to any one. He appeared to be dreadfully bored, as if he was a man without any object in life. His indifference for all around him was absolute. If a poorly dressed person came near him he drew back and regarded him with an expression of sovereign contempt.

In vain eyes of every colour, belonging to young and lovely ladies, sparkling like the stars, sought his countenance—he took no notice of feminine coquetry.

After a time he quitted the promenade and directed his footsteps to the interior of the town, entering small and tortuous streets, until he stopped before a building enveloped in darkness. Not a sound escaped from it, but directly he knocked with his knuckles upon the panels of the door it was opened by a porter, who bowed with the utmost respect and ushered him into a room on the first floor.

This was a brilliantly lighted apartment, the windows of which were secured by heavy shutters, not allowing a ray of light to escape into the street.

A small number of men were grouped round a table, where gambling was going on. A roulette was superintended by two attendants, and it was evident that the house into which the young Englishman had penetrated to kill time for an hour or so was a gaming-den unknown to the police.

The players were as a rule rough and hardy fellows, principally sea captains and subordinate officers in the army. They did not play very high, but their tightened lips and bloodshot eyes showed that their whole souls were in the game of chance.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed the croupier, "it is now nine o'clock, and by the rule of this establishment after that hour nothing less than gold can be staked."

Some of the unsuccessful players fell back, their resources not enabling them to continue playing.

The Englishman however approached the table and put down two gold pieces. The roulette ball circulated in the box and the stranger won.

There was one number on the board which entitled him who got it to twelve times the amount of his stake.

It was this number that the Englishman had backed. Leaving his profits in the same place, he added a handful of Napoleons and won again.

Every one crowded round him and regarded him with the utmost curiosity.

Nine times in succession did the ball stop at that particular number, until he had won a sum nearly amounting to five thousand pounds.

Then he scraped the notes and gold together, and stuffed them as well as he could into his different pockets.

Such a run of luck had rarely been seen before in the gambling-house, and a murmur ran round the envious crowd.

"It is scarcely safe, sir," exclaimed the croupier, "to carry so much money with you. May I have the pleasure to convey it to your residence?"

"No," replied the young man. "I am much obliged for your offer, but I have nothing to fear."

As he spoke two new comers arrived. They were not players, but as they will perform an important part in our story we may be pardoned for describing them with some minuteness. One was a man, the other a young girl, both of them itinerant musicians, singing and dancing in the streets and squares.

The man might have been about five-and-forty, it was difficult to fix any age upon his peculiar visage, which was dark and strongly marked, like that of a gipsy accustomed to all weathers. The nose was the most prominent feature, for it was bent like the beak of a bird of prey, and his eyes gleamed like burning coals.

Over his back was slung a fiddle.

His appearance at first provoked ridicule, but that died away as the beholder saw that a fierce spirit lurked under the mask of the comic actor.

The girl who accompanied him presented a strange contrast to the gipsy.

She was barely eighteen, tall, slender, of a magnificent shape, having a fair complexion, though somewhat bronzed by the sun; her hair was long and splendid. She wore a short skirt to enable her to dance with freedom, and her well-formed legs were encased in long red stockings, while her little feet were hidden in shoes of polished leather, surmounted by silver buckles.

She wore nothing on her head, and her hair was ornamented simply with a rich red rose, which could not vie with the complexion of her cheeks. Over her shoulders she wore a lace shawl, which heightened while it concealed her charms and added to the voluptuous grace of her body.

There was a seductive fascination about the beautiful creature which made the beholders forget that she was a gipsy, a wandering minstrel, dependent for her subsistence upon the casual alms of a crowd.

The young Englishman regarded her with admiration directly she entered the room. He thought her the most charming girl he had ever seen, but he considered her companion a sinister-looking scoundrel.

Striking his hands together, the gipsy played a chord upon the violin, and, raising his voice, exclaimed:

"Noblemen, gentlemen, and kind patrons, my sister and I, who are your most humble servants, have the unparalleled honour to appear before you once more. Our stay in Marseilles is short, engagements at foreign courts will compel us to leave you soon. We will this evening entertain you with our new songs and dances. My sister will dance and sing, while I, your most humble servant, will play to the best of my poor ability. Now, miss, commence—one, two. Show the company what you can do, and I will strike up the music."

He began to play upon the violin a lively and popular air to which the girl sang in a clear and perfect voice. When this was ended she performed a dance that Cerito might have envied, so excellent was its execution.

She was applauded to the echo, but, leaning against the wall as if with fatigue, she took no notice of the acclamations which greeted her.

The gipsy took off his hat, and bowing to right and left collected such money as was given him. The girl was standing near the young Englishman, who drew a note from his pocket and handed it her, saying:

"I owe something to so much grace and beauty."

She bowed with delight at receiving such a large sum and handed it to her brother, then she seized the donor's hand and, raising it to her lips, kissed it gratefully.

The Englishman had scarcely recovered from his surprise when he saw an ugly, rough-looking man

with a rowdy expression, such as is often met with in billiard-rooms and public places, try to pull the singer towards him.

"Come here," said the fellow. "You have given a man a kiss for a five-pound note. I will give you double that sum if you will kiss me."

The girl shook her head.

"You refuse?" he said.

"Yes," she replied. "I do not sell my kisses."

"If you don't sell them you give them."

"That is very likely, but what has it to do with you?" she exclaimed.

"You will see," he answered, savagely, "for I mean to have for nothing what you set so high a price on."

Stretching out his arms to embrace the girl, he seized her round the waist.

She called to her brother to help her—the spectators looked on as if the affair was none of theirs and it was no crime to kiss a dancing girl against her will.

There was one however who thought differently. That was the young Englishman.

"Now, my little dear," said the stranger, holding her tightly, "what will you do? What people won't sell me I take."

"Not always," said the Englishman, advancing and seizing him rudely by the arm.

"Eh? what do you say? You dare to talk to me, an officer in the French marine?" cried the man, who was tall, stout, and apparently strong.

"Let that girl go."

"An order! You give me an order? Me, Captain Bondin! Are you mad, young man?"

"If you do not obey the order I shall make you," replied the Englishman.

As the captain hesitated he wasted no farther time in talking, but struck him heavily in the face, knocking him down, and when he rose with confused ideas of things in general he took him in his arms as if he had been a baby, and carrying him to the door threw him unconcernedly on the landing.

During the colloquy the gipsy and the singer had made their escape and were nowhere to be seen.

A shout of approval greeted the exploit of the Englishman, who ordered a dozen of wine for the company, determined to wait a little while to see if the redoubtable captain would return.

This worthy, however, did not again enter the room, and as nothing was to be seen of him on the staircase it was presumed that he had slunk off, as defeated bullies usually do.

Addressing the croupier, the young man said:

"I always like to afford a gentleman satisfaction, and if this Captain Bondin should wish to know who I am you can tell him that he may ask on the parade for the Honourable Arthur Everton."

"The only son of Lord Kimbolton," exclaimed an English mate, who happened to be in the room.

"Lord Kimbolton is my father," replied Arthur Everton, lighting a cigar preparatory to leaving the saloon.

The company regarded him with respect, mingled with curiosity, but the French captain did not deem it advisable to return.

CHAPTER XXX.

There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Hough how them as we will. *Hamlet.*

THE gipsy and the dancing girl walked into a large street, which was fringed with trees on either side in the manner of Continental boulevards. Under one of these the girl sat down, and resting her head on her hand seemed plunged in deep thought.

"What is the matter with you, Carmen?" exclaimed the gipsy, whose name was Izard; "our evening's work is only just beginning."

"I am thinking," replied Carmen.

"Of what?"

"Cannot you guess? My thoughts are occupied with the gallant young Englishman who so bravely defended me while you stood by like a coward. Ah! I shall never forget that I am English. England is my country, and I shall be glad when I get back again."

"When the police kindly forget one or two little mistakes of mine," replied Izard, with a diabolical grin, "I shall be as pleased as you to return, but, as to the young Englishman—bah! I wish he had not interfered. The French captain would have paid handsomely for a kiss, and after all what is a kiss?"

"Indiscriminate kissing makes all the difference between vice and virtue. What I am afraid of," added Carmen, flushing visibly, "is that the cowardly captain will lie in wait for my defender and try to take his revenge by assaulting him in the dark."

"Not he," said Izard. "The fellow is a coward. I have seen him often before. Every one in Marseilles knows the captain. Get up and come along; we must make some more money to-night."

"You can go. I shall stay here," replied Carmen.

"In the street?"

"Yes. I have two objects. I want to see this young Englishman come from the gambling-house safe and sound, and after that I intend to follow him home and find out who and what he is."

"I don't see what it has to do with you. Let him alone. People should mind their own business. Take my advice. Am I not your brother?"

"You have told me so, and as I know absolutely nothing about my parentage I suppose I must believe you," replied Carmen. "What have you to complain of? I wander about with you from place to place like a vagabond. I dance, I sing, you take the money people give me. In return for which you find me a poor lodging and something to eat and drink, with now and then some new finery to make me attract. What would you do without me? The day after we separated you would have to beg or steal to get a living. You know what I am worth to you, Izard, so say no more about my duty and what I ought to do. I am a woman, which is as much as to say I must have my own way."

Without doubt Izard found this speech conclusive, for he hung down his head and made no reply.

Carmen continued:

"In future you must obey me."

"Say no more," exclaimed Izard. "I will gratify your caprice. You will not be guided by my experience, and there is an end of it. Do you want to know where this young Englishman lives?"

"I do."

"Very well, we must follow him; but what will Quirino say?"

He regarded her earnestly as he mentioned this name, and saw that she shuddered uneasily.

"He will say nothing because he will know nothing unless you enlighten him," replied Carmen.

"That I am not likely to do," said Izard. "For I am afraid of Quirino, who is artful as a serpent and as jealous as a tiger. You are engaged to him, you know."

"But I am not his wife, and never will be; my ideas have undergone a great change lately."

"If Quirino knew that you took an interest in this Englishman I would not give a franc for his life."

Carmen's eyes flashed.

"This man Quirino, who inspires you with fear and me with disgust, must be stamped out, discarded, forgotten. I dream of wealth and grandeur. I want to possess an immense fortune, and ally myself to an illustrious house."

Izard laughed.

"It seems to me, my little sister, that your ambition has large wings," he exclaimed. "Wealth and grandeur! It sounds well, but we are only dreamers. We shall never be anything but the poor creatures we are now."

"Who knows?" replied Carmen, abstractedly.

"You have no soul; I have an exalted spirit. I am young, and my glass tells me I am beautiful. Does it speak falsely to me, Izard?"

"No. You are lovely as an angel; and you have the spirit of a fiend at times."

"Thank you; better that than be a worm to be trampled on."

"What is the result of your argument?" he asked.

"Simply that I will never marry your friend Quirino," she answered, decisively.

"My friend! He is not much of that. The house we live in is his and his mother's. He is an honest boatman, fisherman, or what not. They say he came from Rome because he had killed a man in a passion; that is all I know of him. Take care, my sister; Quirino is not a man to be trifled with. He will revenge himself."

"On me? On a woman whom he pretends to love?" replied Carmen, contemptuously. "I am not afraid; men who make war upon women are miserable cowards."

Izard groaned deeply at his sister's obstinacy, but he did not deem it advisable to answer her.

Just at this moment the French captain, who in reality was a bravo and swindler, assuming a rank which did not belong to him, passed by without seeing the musicians, and posted himself under a tree a short way off.

Lowering her voice, Carmen said:

"There he is. Look, Izard. It is an ambush. He intends to fall upon the Englishman, and perhaps kill him."

"Not unlikely," replied Izard, under his breath.

"We must watch, and prevent this crime."

Izard grasped firmly a short but stout cudgel which he carried in his belt.

A few minutes elapsed, and footsteps were again heard.

This time the Englishman came along, gaily humming an opera air, and unsuspecting of danger.

"Follow him," whispered Carmen.

The thick foliage of the trees created a dense shade, through which the light of the moon could not penetrate.

Izard could not distinguish the form of Arthur Everton, but he could hear his voice, which drowned the heavy breathing of the captain.

"Bother the woman!" muttered Izard as he crept stealthily along. "Who knows that Quirino will not say it is my fault? I would give something if Carmen had never seen this Englishman."

His monologue was brought to an abrupt conclusion by his sister, who seized his arm tightly, crying:

"Look! Make haste, or you will be too late! The captain knows he has won a large sum of money and means to rob him."

As she spoke the Frenchman emerged from his place of concealment.

He raised his heavy arm; in his hand was a bludgeon which would have felled an ox.

Carmen uttered a piercing shriek, which caused the captain's arm to tremble, and though the blow descended on Arthur Everton's head it was much less severe than it otherwise would have been.

Alarmed at the cry, he turned to run away, just as his victim fell senseless and bleeding at his feet.

But it was too late.

Izard sprang upon him, and dealt him a blow which broke his skull.

The Frenchman fell heavily almost by the side of the young Englishman.

Carmen arrived at this moment.

"Well?" said she.

"It is all over," replied Izard. "I have done for the Frenchman, but I don't think the Englishman is much hurt, though he is stunned."

They both fell on their knees by the side of Arthur Everton, but with very different intentions.

Carmen put her hand on his heart to see if it still pulsed, while her brother, obeying his instinct, began to rifle his pockets, which as we know were stuffed to repletion with gold and notes.

They both uttered an exclamation of joy.

Carmen felt a slight pulsation, but perfectly distinct and regular.

"He lives," she said.

"My fortune is made!" cried Izard, hastily transferring the money to his own person with a rapidity that could only be the result of practice.

Near Arthur Everton's head Carmen encountered a small pocket-book, which she instantly took possession of, thrusting it into the bosom of her dress.

"Izard," she replied, rising to her feet, "take the young man in your arms and carry him to the nearest house."

"They will say that we are the assassins," replied her brother.

"No matter. He must not lie here to die."

"Hark—people are coming!" cried Izard. "We must escape."

In fact the noise of people coming up the street was distinctly audible.

"Let us wait and speak to them," said Carmen.

"Wait here? Are you mad? We shall be taken to prison; and what mercy will be shown to the poor gipsy? They will say I tried to kill both men, and I shall be—"

"Coward!" said Carmen, angrily. "You know we are innocent."

"What of that?" replied Izard. "Come away, I say. It is impossible to prove it; the Englishman himself could give no evidence in our favour."

He seized his sister by the arm, and, exerting all his strength, dragged her away into the darkness.

They were just in time, for, attracted by the scream that Carmen had given utterance to, some policemen made their appearance.

At the same moment a carriage stopped at the scene of the struggle, when, by the aid of lanterns, the police examined two bodies.

A lady's voice exclaimed through the open window:

"Stop at once! There has been some outrage here! Go and find out for me what it is."

A footman descended from the box of the carriage and approached the spot.

Presently he returned and informed his mistress that two men were lying dead or apparently so on the pavement; one was an Englishman, who seemed to have been attacked by the other. The Englishman was young, handsome, and well dressed.

"With care, miss, I think he will recover. The police are about to send for stretchers to take the bodies away."

"I cannot allow that; my father would never pardon me if I did not extend help to a countryman in distress. Give the police my name and address, and place the Englishman in the carriage," said the young lady.

"He shall be attended to by our own doctor, and that quickly."

The police made no objection to a proposal which in reality saved them trouble.

Arthur Everton was carefully transported to the carriage, and extended upon the soft and perfumed cushions, the young lady, who was in evening dress, and seemed to be returning from a party, supporting his head upon her dress, and gazing into his pale, impassive face with an expression of compassion such as the softer sex exhibit for those of the opposite when in pain or danger.

In a moment the carriage started again at a gentle pace, going towards the most aristocratic part of the town.

(To be continued.)

LORD DANE'S ERROR.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MEANWHILE how was it going with Perdita?

Not well, but still not so ill as Mr. Cheeny had calculated and hoped.

When Grizzle, the idiot dwarf, sprang after her she fled at first in horror and affright. But she only ran a few steps. She had not lost her presence of mind, and she instantly discovered that he was not following her. She stopped and looked back.

Grizzle could not come any farther. He was chained to a stout iron ring riveted in the wall, one end of the chain being fastened to this, and one to a sort of iron girdle which he wore, which was furnished with a lock. The grim, gaunt, white-haired housekeeper carried the key to this, and she appeared now in a doorway to the right of the passage, standing rigidly and with expressionless face, as though she had been carved out of the wall beside her.

Perdita stood and looked deliberately now at both her keepers. Both were formidable enough, no doubt, but Cheeny's frightful intimations concerning the dwarf made him seem the more so. He was hideous. There was something most repulsive in his aspect. He looked ferocious and cruel too.

"But, perhaps," reflected Perdita, very sensibly, "it is only his ugliness that makes him look so savage."

Grizzle was moving backward and forward the length of his chain, grinning horribly and now and then uttering discordant sounds more like the howl of a wild beast than the cry of a human being. But Perdita noticed that as he approached the grim and stony-faced housekeeper he gnashed his long, tuskl-like teeth more horribly, and made frantic leaps, as though he would reach and rend her if he could. He seemed to have entirely forgotten Perdita's presence.

The young girl approached him at a safe distance, but he still gave no sign of knowing she was there. His rage, for rage it surely was, seemed all directed towards Mrs. Griff, as Cheeny had named the woman he called his aunt.

Suddenly Perdita uttered a cry. The chain which held Grizzle had snapped at one of his wild springs. The grim housekeeper turned at that cry, and saw what had happened. None too soon, for the monster, with a hoarse, maniac howl, was upon her.

An instant the woman quailed, a look of absolute terror coming into her stony face.

To Perdita it seemed that she should be torn into a thousand pieces.

But suddenly the creature stopped, as it were to enjoy the terror he had inspired.

The colourless eyes of Mrs. Griff fastened upon him like two points of flame. She seemed absolutely to hold him with that look while she said to Perdita, in an expressionless voice that well matched her face:

"Go into the room behind you, miss, and bring me the whip you will find there hanging upon the wall. We shall both be killed in one minute more if you are not quick about it."

The young girl had darted towards the doorway opening into the desolate courtyard, not so much to escape as to summon help. But the carriage in which she had come with Cheeny had vanished, and, with a quick, doubtful glance at Grizzle, she sprang towards the room of which Mrs. Griff spoke. A strange sort of instrument, like a whip with many lashes, hung upon the wall, each lash knotted for some distance from the end. It had a long handle of woven leather.

Perdita took it down, and passed it, shrinkingly, and with a white face, to the woman.

Mrs. Griff's stony lips actually relaxed into the semblance of a smile as she received it and slowly raised it over her head.

As for the idiot, at the first sight of the whip abject terror had taken the place of the ferocity and rage which had made him so terrible before. He probably knew those cruel lashes and what they boded. At the housekeeper's command he retreated towards the doorway.

"Come and clasp the chain while I hold the whip over him," she called to Perdita.

But the young girl began to suspect that she had missed a chance to escape from her prison which would not occur again soon. She repented now that she had not taken advantage of it.

"Mrs. Griff wants to make the creature hate me, as he does her, she thought, suspiciously. "She may manage him alone, as I daresay she has before now."

Accordingly, instead of going to the housekeeper's assistance, she retreated towards the apartment which Cheeny had told her was to be hers, and, having ascertained that she could close the door quickly, she stood, with it partly open, watching what would happen.

"Are you coming?" the housekeeper called. "I am not," Perdita answered, calmly. "You have always managed him before; you can manage him now."

Mrs. Griff said no more, but, taking a key that hung at her belt, she unlocked the padlock which held one end of the chain and removed that portion, then, without laying down her formidable whip, passed the chain which held Grizzle over the staple and replaced and relocked the padlock.

That done, and the monster secured for the present, Mrs. Griff, without looking towards Perdita, disappeared within the room in which the many-lashed whip had hung. Presently she appeared again with another chain, with which she proceeded to make Grizzle still more secure, passing it first through a stout ring in his iron girdle, and through another fastened in the wall.

The idiot was now so securely fastened that he could not break away, it seemed, and Mrs. Griff proceeded to take her revenge for the fright he had given her.

The idiot knew as well as she what was coming. He did not try to break his chain now; the sight of Mrs. Griff's whip was enough. He covered and whined like a cur who knows the drubbing he is about to get.

Perdita was watching from her doorway, and saw Mrs. Griff elevate her instrument of torture slowly. The next moment it descended, and the howl of agony that broke from the poor idiot made her very blood curdle with horror.

Again it rose, that terrible whip, but before it could descend a second time Perdita had forgotten everything but the humanity within her, and darted forward.

She caught the woman's arm frantically. She tore her whip from her, with a sudden strength of which she had not deemed herself capable, and flung it beyond the idiot into the courtyard.

Mrs. Griff's amazement was something worth seeing. That passionless face turned a sort of green hue, and the short gray hair seemed to bristle as she bent her white eyes on Perdita.

Perdita was looking at the idiot, whom that one blow from Mrs. Griff's scorpion lash had seemingly covered with blood—every lash had left a cut behind.

"I should think he'd want to murder you," she said, with a curling, angry lip. "What are you made of?"

Mrs. Griff's expression grew partially sullen.

"It's the only way to manage him at all," she said, glumly. "Why did you throw my whip out there? Don't you know there's no way of getting to it but by this door, or else climbing over a high wall, and there isn't any ladder?"

"I'm glad of it. I hope Grizzle will get your horrible whip and break it into inch pieces," said Perdita, spiritedly; "I wouldn't use a mad dog that way."

"Wait till he gets after you in one of his rages, and you'll wish for just such a whip as that. It is the only way to control him."

"Is it? I never saw a creature yet that kindness wouldn't manage better than such brutality as that."

"Indeed!" sneered Mrs. Griff, insolently. "I've a mind to let him loose for the sake of seeing you try it on. How do you think he served me once? I was here, with nobody but him, and he was loose. He'd been so easily managed for a good while that I thought there wasn't any danger, and I was going about without my whip. I'd just come in from out doors and was making for the room yonder when he burst out of that closet there, that very whip in his hand, and bellowing like mad. I was right at the threshold of my own room, or I never could have got in. But I did, and had just slammed the door and slipped the bolt when he came raging against it. I thought the door would go from its frame, strong as it is, and it did come near it. He's as strong as an ox. Well, he kept me there till we were well nigh starved to death, both of us, for you see I had the key of the store-room in my pocket, and he couldn't get anything to eat. Hunger made me bold and him careless—I watched till sleep got the better of him and crept out and got my whip again. I was in there two days and a night, and my hair was as dark as yours when I went in. You see what it is now. Oh! he knows how I hate him. He thinks he

will kill me some day, and I believe he will. But I'll have my pay out of him first. You'd best not meddle with us again, miss."

Perdita's face showed her disgust and anger. "Why do you torture him so? Why don't you shut him up if he's dangerous? You should not aggravate him so."

"It's no use to shut him up. He always gets out some way. Besides, Nathan wants his help now."

"Nathan?" questioned Perdita.

"Nathan Cheeny," said the housekeeper, grimly; "just let Grizzle get hold of you once, miss, that's all."

Perdita shuddered and grew pale. Her wicked persecutor's own threats concerning this monster recoiled to her.

Mrs. Griff grinned again. She felt spiteful and liked to see the young girl's face troubled.

Poor Grizzle did not look so very formidable, however, just now, in spite of his ghastly appearance. Crouched on the floor in the most submissive attitude, he was watching Mrs. Griff and Perdita with the dull, suffering look of a beaten animal.

Perdita's courage rallied as she met that look. She fancied that there was a ray of something like grateful feeling in it.

"If the woman had as much humanity as he has I should not be long in getting away from here," she thought.

She turned towards Mrs. Griff.

"Are you really his aunt—Cheeny's I mean?"

"Of course. Didn't he say so?"

"Yes, he called you that, but I thought you seemed afraid of him."

The woman gave her a chilly, furtive look.

"Why did you think that? Why should I be afraid of him?"

"You acted as if you were. Does he pay you anything for keeping me here?"

"Not money."

"What then?" and Perdita's dark, bright eyes met Mrs. Griff's daringly.

The housekeeper compressed her thin lips as though she had no idea of telling, and then suddenly relaxed them. She was a woman in spite of her stony looks, and could not help expressing her elation at what she considered her good prospects.

"He has promised that I shall be housekeeper for him and you when—when you are married."

Perdita's bright eyes gleamed. She spoke in a sharp, ringing voice:

"He will never make me marry him, Mrs. Griff, if he keeps me here a thousand years; and if such a thing could be as my marrying him I would poison you before I would permit you to be housekeeper for me. So, if that is to be your reward for keeping me a prisoner here, you may as well let me go."

Mrs. Griff looked a little startled, and her light eyes flamed with momentary anger. Then she suddenly subsided into her usual stoniness of aspect.

"What time will you have dinner, miss?" she asked, grimly.

"Any time you like," answered Perdita, indifferently.

"I'll go and see about it," the woman said, and vanished down one of the dark stone passages branching from the hall.

Perdita stood looking after her a moment. Then she looked towards the room that was called hers—that chill, mouldy apartment which seemed only fit for bats and owls—and shook her head slightly. Lastly, she glanced at Grizzle, who, still crouched by the doorway, was watching her.

"I'll try it," she said. "He looks harmless enough."

She advanced a few steps.

The creature's eyes followed her, but he did not move.

"I am sure he looks harmless," Perdita repeated, still advancing.

Grizzle was not precisely in the doorway, but crouched so near it that it was impossible to pass without almost touching him.

"He certainly does look harmless," said the young girl to herself for the third time, and took one more step. Another would bring her within reach of the horrible monster's hand. She hesitated, looking at him intently.

His expression had not changed.

His eyes still wore the same mild, almost patient look, but as she took that last step that brought her so near him the creature's long arms suddenly darted forth like the claws of a crab, his immense hands closed on the two portions of Perdita's long travelling cloak, which she still wore, and he stood upright and huge, his chains clanking, his repulsive face and fiery eyes so close that she felt his hot breath.

Perdita made one frantic and vain attempt to release herself. Then her senses seemed deserting her as those horrible arms closed about her. She could

not even scream. She was as it were paralyzed with terror and disgust.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BARON CHANDOS was waiting outside in the hall for Heath when he left his wife after that terrible interview detailed in a former chapter. He had guessed what was coming partially when Sybil sent for her husband, and he had got rid of Deguise as soon as possible. Then, meeting Louise, he had heard from her of Adèle's arrival.

From that moment he guessed too truly how Heath's interview with his deceived wife would terminate.

He blamed himself bitterly now for the part he had taken in persuading Volney to postpone revealing the truth.

"If he had gone to her and told her himself deliberately," he said to himself, "if he had prepared her mind for what was coming, I do believe it would have been all settled pleasantly, bad as he's used her. But I don't like the look of that other maid being here. She has come to make mischief, and she will."

He looked anxiously at Volney's face as he came out from his wife's apartments, and though he had expected something like it, he was shocked beyond measure at the stony change that had come there, the look that told of something worse even than despair—the death of Hope.

Volney did not see him, but was passing on with a laboured, dragging step, like one touched with paralysis.

Then Chandos came forward, his own cheeks white, and laid his arm affectionately about his shoulders. Neither spoke till they reached Volney's own room. Heath moved mechanically, dropping like an old man into the chair Chandos had placed for him.

The baron brought a bottle of wine, poured out a brimming goblet, and held it to him.

Volney shook his head, pointing to his throat, while a sort of convulsion crossed his face.

"I couldn't swallow it," he said.

"Nonsense; yes, you can. Try. You must," insisted the baron.

Volney took the goblet in his hand, put it to his lips, and set it down.

"No," he said.

Baron Chandos looked at him in a puzzled way.

"Tell me one thing," he said—"does she know all?"

"Everything."

Chandos bit his lip hard, looked at Heath, and then away again irresolutely.

Then he said, abruptly:

"Does she think you killed him?"

"Yes."

"You told her just how much you knew about it?"

"Yes."

"She would not believe you?"

"She said she could not believe me. I don't blame her."

"What will you do now?"

Heath passed his hand across his forehead, and looked at Chandos as though he was trying to comprehend him.

"I don't know," he said; "let me alone."

"I am going to talk with your wife. Will you wait here till I come back?"

"Yes."

Chandos cast an anxious look about the room, and then went and took from the drawer where he knew they were kept a pair of silver-mounted pistols.

He hid them inside his coat, and went out of the room.

"I don't think he'd use them," he muttered, "but I'll feel safer with these out of the room."

He went and knocked at the door of Sybil's apartments.

Louise opened to him. Adèle had already gone, Louise had been crying, her eyes were red, her lips quivering.

"How is your mistress?" the baron asked.

"She says she's going away in the morning. We are packing now."

The baron looked surprised. He had expected to find Sybil in hysterics or something of the sort.

On the contrary, she had already decided upon her course and was moving forward in it like a woman of mature years and cold heart.

"Can I see your mistress a moment?" he asked.

"I will see."

Louise crossed the boudoir, and entered the dressing-room beyond.

The baron stood waiting by the door of the boudoir.

In a moment Sybil herself came in, still wearing her white silk dinner dress. She was not calm, her eyes were feverishly bright, her cheeks hectic, but she was quite self-possessed. The baron guessed that she had not shed a tear. But she looked so young, so fragile and child-like, notwithstanding her queenly bearing and proud air, that his heart warmed with pity for her.

"I have to apologize for intruding upon you here

and at this hour," he said as she motioned him to a seat. "But I come on an errand of mercy, I am sure."

Sybil's dark eyes dilated.

"If you have come to speak to me of him, pardon me, I cannot hear you."

"Not if I can put a new light on the revelation that has just been made?"

"How can you know anything about it? Do you know—know who killed my father?"

She made great effort to speak calmly, but the colour flickered feverishly in her cheek, and her slight fingers were wrung tightly together.

"I know that your husband did not do it," he said, with a glance of compassion.

Sybil shook her small head.

"No, no. Nobody knows that unless it is one who saw the deed done by another. I would accept no other testimony than that. I dare not. Oh, papa, papa, if I had only known it sooner. If we could only be back at Graystone together."

She had marvellous self-control. Only the working hands, the flutter of colour in her usually pale cheek told how agitated she was.

Baron Chandos reflected a moment. Then he said, softly:

"Do you not love your husband, dear Lady Sybil?"

Sybil pressed both her hands upon her panting chest suddenly. He could hear her breathe. Her features twitched, her lips moved, but uttered no sound.

The baron was frightened.

"Dear Lady Sybil!" he cried; "I beg of you—"

Sybil rose suddenly and walked across the room and back with a quick step.

Then she stopped again, resting her hand upon the back of a chair.

"Baron Chandos," she said, in a low, passionate voice, "you come from him, therefore I will answer you this once. If I loved the man you call my husband a million times over, I would tear his image out of my heart now, though it took my life with it. I wish never to see him again. As to forgiving him, I never can—I never will!"

"Not even if he be proved utterly innocent of your father's death?"

"It will take more than common testimony to his innocence to convince me after his long deceit to me."

"Still you will give him the chance? You will forgive him the rest if he prove himself innocent of that?"

"Let him do it if he can," she said, passionately.

"How can you talk to me of forgiving anything while I believe that he did that? I can see it all—how he cheated papa all the time he was deceiving me. He is so clever with his pen, I daresay he wrote papa just as false letters in my name as he wrote me in papa's; then when papa found it all out they met and quarrelled. He told me that himself; and when he went away from Leuseleigh he had deep wounds in his shoulder which he accounted to me for in a very lame manner. I can understand how he got them now. He and papa met and fought. I don't think he meant to kill him, but I believe he did kill him, and I will never, never forgive him that or—the other!"

Baron Chandos did not interrupt her; he waited till she stopped speaking before he said:

"I can tell you how he got the hurt in his shoulder if you do not yet know. Your father brought a blood-hound with him to Leuseleigh. It was with the dog your husband fought. He utterly refused to raise his hand against your father. He fought for his life with a blood-hound."

Sybil's eyes darkened a moment, then her lips parted in an unnatural smile.

"He told you that? It was very ingenious, but not half so much so as the letters he wrote me in poor papa's name."

Chandos turned to go.

"You do not wish to believe him innocent," he said, almost angrily.

Sybil compressed her delicate lips.

"If I did wish it, all the more I would resist my own inclination. How dare I believe in anything but his guilt in the face of reason? You have nothing but his word; I know better than you how well he fabricates."

Chandos looked at her sadly.

He could not blame her. He felt that he had no right to blame her at all; he felt that she was really justified in feeling as she did—in doubting utterly any assertion of a man who had deceived her as Heath had.

He told her so, but he added:

"I do not blame you, because you have been wronged; and in the heat of your indignation and under the weight of this other grief you cannot judge your husband in an unprejudiced manner, as I think I can. I know him the first seven years of his life. I know what his nature is, however it may have become warped since then. I came here, believing him guilty of murder; watching him I read guilt in his face, the pallor and uneasy looks of a disturbed conscience, but not such guilt as I came

to find. I would stake my life on his innocence of crime, unless it be a crime to love you, to worship you with deathless adoration."

Sybil closed her eyes while he was speaking.

Baron Chandos even fancied that a tear forced its way through those tightly closed lids. The eyes which looked at him next, however, were bright and tearless. But there was fever enough on her cheek to have dried many tears quickly.

"I am going away, Baron Chandos," she said. "I mean to go away from here in the morning. Don't tell"—she stopped, putting her hand to her throat as though the words choked her—"Mr. Heath. I don't want to see him again."

Baron Chandos looked distressed.

"My dear lady, whither will you go?" he asked.

"I can go back to Graystone."

"Not alone?"

"Why not?"

He reflected a moment.

"I will arrange to accompany you."

"I will not have you," she said, arrogantly.

Chandos smiled in a rather peculiar manner, but he only said, growing grave again instantly:

"I should like to take some message from you to your husband, Lady Sybil. You may be sorry some day if you go away without."

"Why may I?" she asked, quickly.

"I should not be surprised if you and he never meet again," he answered.

"I presume we never shall."

"If you never should you might in time to come regret that you had not, while you might, forgiven him."

"I presume I shall have the chance to do so hereafter, should I ever feel any more like it than I do now."

"You will not," spoke Chandos, sternly. "He is a desperate, a reckless man now, since he has lost you. He is careless of his life. The probabilities are that, if he wait to meet it, he will be arrested within twenty-four hours for the murder. I know him better than to believe he will survive such a misfortune, innocent as he is. The day that sees your husband arrested for your father's death, Lady Sybil, will be his last of life."

(To be continued.)

ROBERT RUSHTON'S DESTINY.

CHAPTER IX.

IN spite of his injured arm Ben Haley succeeded in propelling the boat to the opposite shore. The blood was steadily though slowly flowing from his wound, and had already stained his shirt red for a considerable space. In the excitement of first receiving it he had not felt the pain; now, however, its effects began to be felt, and, as might be expected, his feeling of animosity towards our hero was not diminished.

"That meddling boy!" he muttered between his teeth. "I wish I had had time to give him one blow—he wouldn't have wanted another. I hope the wound isn't serious—if it is I may have paid dear for the gold."

Still, the thought of the gold in his pocket afforded some satisfaction. He had been penniless; now he was the possessor of—as nearly as he could estimate, for he had not had time to count—one hundred pounds in gold. That was more than he had ever possessed before at one time, and would enable him to live at ease for a while.

On reaching the shore he was about to leave the boat to its fate when he perceived a boy standing at a little distance with a hatchet in his hand. This gave him an idea.

"Come here, boy," he said.

The boy came forward, and examined the stranger with curiosity.

"Is that your hatchet?" asked Haley.

"No, sir. It belongs to my father."

"Would you mind selling it to me if I will give you money enough to buy a new one?"

"This is an old hatchet."

"It will suit me just as well, and I haven't time to buy another. Would your father sell it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. What will a new one cost you?"

The boy named the price.

"Here is the money, and a shilling more to pay you for your trouble."

The boy pocketed the money with satisfaction, for he seldom had any in his possession. He already had a shilling saved up towards effecting a purchase which he had long held in contemplation, and the stranger's gratuity would just make up the sum necessary to secure it. He was in a hurry to accomplish this end, and, accordingly, no sooner had he received the money than he started at once for the village shop. His departure was satisfactory to Ben Haley, who now had nothing to prevent his carrying out his plans.

"I wanted to be revenged on the boy, and now I

know how," he said. "I'll make some trouble for him with this hatchet."

He drew the boat up and fastened it. Then he deliberately proceeded to cut away at the bottom with his newly acquired hatchet.

He had a strong arm, and his blows were rendered more effective by triumphant malice. The boat he supposed belonged to Robert, and he was determined to spoil it.

He hacked away with such energy that soon there was a large hole in the bottom of the boat.

Not content with inhaling this damage, he cut it in various other places, until it presented an appearance very different from the neat, staunch boat of which Will Paine had been so proud.

At length Ben stopped and contemplated the ruin he had wrought with malicious satisfaction.

"That's the first instalment of my revenge," he said. "I should like to look at my young ferryman's face when he sees his boat again. It'll cost him more than he'll ever get from my miserly uncle to repair it. It serves him right for meddling with matters that don't concern him. And now I must be getting away, for my affectionate uncle will soon be raising a hue and cry after me if I'm not very much mistaken."

He would have liked to have gone at once to obtain medical assistance for his wound, but to go to the village doctor would be dangerous. He must wait till he had got out of the town limits, and the farther away the better.

He knew when the train would start, and made his way across the fields to the station, arriving just in time to catch it.

First, however, he bound a handkerchief round his shoulder to arrest the flow of blood.

When he reached the station, and was purchasing his ticket, the station-master noticed the blood upon his shirt.

"Are you hurt, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, a little," said Ben.

"How did it happen?" inquired the other.

"I was out shooting," said Ben, carelessly, "with a friend who wasn't much used to fire-arms. In swinging his gun round it accidentally went off, and I got shot through the shoulder."

"That's bad," said the station-master, in a tone of sympathy. "You'd better go to the doctor's, and have it attended to."

"I would," said Ben, "but I am called away by business of the greatest importance. I can get along for a few hours, and then I'll have a doctor to look at it. How soon will the train be here?"

"It's coming now."

"You see I couldn't wait long enough for the doctor," added Ben, anxious to account satisfactorily for his inattention to the medical assistance of which he stood in need.

When he was fairly in the carriage and the train had started he felt considerably relieved. He was speeding fast away from the man he had robbed, and in a few days he might be at sea, able to snap his fingers at his miserly uncle and the boy whom he determined some day to meet and settle scores with.

From one enemy of Robert the transition is brief and natural to another. At this very moment Halbert Davis was sauntering idly and discontentedly through the streets of the village. He was the son of a rich man, or of one whom most persons, by his own family included, supposed to be rich; but this consciousness, though it made him proud, by no means made him happy. He had that morning at the breakfast-table asked his father to give him a boat like Will Paine's, but Mr. Davis had answered by a decided refusal.

"You don't need any boat," he said, shortly.

"It wouldn't cost very much," pleaded Halbert.

"How much do you suppose?"

"Will Paine told me his father paid ten pounds for his."

"Why don't you borrow it sometimes? That would do as well as if you had one of your own."

"I can't borrow it. Will started a day or two since for boarding-school."

"Better still. I will hire it for you while he is away."

"I thought of it myself, but just before he went away Will lent it to the factory boy," said Halbert, sneering as he uttered the last two words.

"Do you mean young Rushton?"

"Yes."

"That's only a boy's arrangement. I will see Mr. Paine, and propose to pay him for the use of the boat, and I presume he will be willing to accede to my terms."

"When will you see him?" asked Halbert, hopefully.

"I will try to see him in the course of the day."

It turned out, however, that there was no need of calling on Mr. Paine, for five minutes later, having some business with Mr. Davis, he rang the bell and was ushered into the breakfast-room.

"Excuse my early call," he said, "but I wished to see you about—"

and here he stated his business, in which my readers will feel no interest.

When that was over Mr. Davis introduced the subject of the boat, and made the offer referred to.

"I am sorry to refuse," said Mr. Paine, "but my son, before going away, passed his promise to Robert Rushton that he should have it during his absence."

With a disagreeable smile Mrs. Davis, who was present at the interview, inquired:

"Do you hold yourself bound by such a promise?"

"Certainly," said the lawyer, gravely. "Robert is my son's valued friend, and I respect boyish friendship. I remember very well my own boyhood, and I had some strong friendships at that time."

"I don't see what your son can find to like in Robert Rushton," said Mrs. Davis, with something of Halbert's manner. "I think him a very disagreeable and impertinent boy."

Mr. Paine did not admire Mrs. Davis, and was not likely to be influenced by her prejudices. Without inquiry, therefore, into the cause of her unfavourable opinion he said:

"I have formed quite a different opinion of Robert. I am persuaded that you do him injustice."

"He attacked Halbert ferociously the other day," said Mr. Davis, determined to impart the information whether asked or not. "He has an ungovernable temper."

Mr. Paine glanced shrewdly at Halbert, of whose arrogant and quarrelsome disposition he had heard from his own son, and replied:

"I make it a point not to interfere in boys' quarrels. William speaks very highly of Robert, and it affords him great satisfaction, I know, to leave the boat in his charge."

Mr. Davis saw that there was no use in pursuing the subject, and it dropped.

After the lawyer had gone Halbert made his petition anew, but without satisfactory results. The fact was Mr. Davis had heard unfavourable reports from London the day previous respecting a stock in which he had an interest, and it was not a favourable moment to prefer a request involving the outlay of money.

It was this refusal which made Halbert discontented and unhappy.

The factory boy, as he sneeringly called him, could have a boat, while he, a gentleman's son, was forced to go without one.

Of course, he would not stoop to ask the loan of the boat, however much he wanted it, from a boy he disliked so much as Robert. He wondered whether Robert was out this morning.

So, unconsciously, his steps led him to the bank of the river, where he knew the boat was generally kept. He cast his eyes towards it, when what was his surprise to find the object of his desire half full of water, with a large hole in the bottom and defaced in other respects!

CHAPTER X.

HALBERT'S first emotion was surprise, his second was gratification. His rival could no longer enjoy the boat which he had envied him. Not only that, but he would get into trouble with Mr. Paine on account of the damage which it had received. Being under his care, it was his duty to keep it in good condition.

"I wonder how it happened?" thought Halbert. "Won't the young beggar be in a precious scrape when it's found out? Most likely he won't let Mr. Paine know."

In this thought he judged Robert by himself. Straightway the plan suggested itself of going to the lawyer himself and informing him of Robert's delinquency. It would be a very agreeable way of taking revenge upon him. The plan so pleased him that he at once directed his steps towards Mr. Paine's office.

On his way he overtook Hester Paine, the young lady on whose account he was chiefly incensed against Robert.

Being as desirous as ever of standing in the young lady's good graces, he hurriedly advanced to her side, and, lifting his hat with an air of ceremonious politeness, he said:

"Good-morning, Hester."

Hester Paine was not particularly well pleased with the meeting. She had been made acquainted by her brother with the quarrel between Halbert and Robert, and the mean revenge the former had taken in procuring the dismissal of the latter from the factory. Having a partiality for Robert, this was not likely to recommend his enemy in her eyes.

"Good-morning, Mr. Davis," she said, with cool politeness.

"You are very ceremonious this morning, Miss Hester," said Halbert, who liked well enough to be called "Mr." by others but not by Hester.

"Am I?" asked Hester, indifferently. "How so?"

"You called me Mr. Davis."

"That's your name, isn't it?"

"I am not called so by my intimate friends."

"No, I suppose not," said Hester, thus disclaiming the title.

Halbert bit his lips.

He was not in love—not because he was too young, but because he was too selfish to be in love with anybody but himself.

But he admired Hester, and the more she slighted him the more he was determined to force her to like him.

He did however feel a little piqued at her behaviour, and that influenced his next words.

"Perhaps you'd rather have the factory boy walking beside you," he said, with not very good judgment if he wanted to recommend himself to her.

"There are a good many factory boys," she said, coldly. "I can't tell whom you mean unless you explain yourself."

"I mean Robert Rushton."

"Perhaps I might," said Hester.

"He's a low fellow," said Halbert, bitterly.

"No one thinks so but you," retorted Hester, indignantly.

"My father was obliged to dismiss him from the factory."

"I know all about that, and who was the means of having him sent away."

"I suppose you mean me."

"Yes, Halbert Davis, I mean you; and I consider it a very mean thing to do," said Hester, her cheeks flushing with the indignation she felt.

"He attacked me like the low ruffian that he is," pleaded Halbert, in extenuation. "If he hadn't insulted me he wouldn't have got into trouble."

"You struck him first, you know you did. My brother told me all about it. You were angry because he walked home with me. I would rather go home alone any time than have your escort."

"You're very polite, Miss Hester," said Halbert, angrily. "I can tell you some news about your favourite."

"If it's anything bad I won't believe it."

"You'll have to believe it."

"Well, what is it?" demanded Hester, who was not altogether unlike girls in general, and so felt curious to learn what it was that Halbert had to reveal.

"Your brother was foolish enough to leave his boat in Rushton's care."

"That is no news. Will was very glad to do Robert a favour."

"He'll be sorry enough now."

"Why will he?"

"Because the boat is completely ruined."

"I don't believe it," said Hester, hastily.

"It's true, though. I was down by the river just now, and saw it with my own eyes. There is a great hole in the bottom, and it is hacked with a hatchet, so that it wouldn't bring half price."

"Do you know who did it?" asked Hester, with the momentary thought that Halbert himself might have been tempted by his hatred into the commission of the outrage.

"No, I don't. It was only accidental my seeing it."

"Was Robert with the boat?"

"No."

"Have you asked him about it?"

"No, I have not seen him."

"Then I am sure some enemy has done it. I am certain it is no fault of his."

"If your brother had let me had the boat it wouldn't have happened. I offered him a fair price for its use."

"He won't be sorry he refused, whatever has happened. But I must bid you good-morning, Mr. Davis," said the young lady, who, being now at her own gate, opened it and closed it behind her.

"She might have been polite enough to invite me in," said Halbert, with chagrin. "I don't see how she can be so taken up with that low fellow."

He waited till Hester had entered the house, and then bent his steps to Mr. Paine's office.

The lawyer was sitting at a table covered with papers, from which he looked up as Halbert entered the office.

"Sit down, Halbert," he said. "Any message from your father?"

"No, sir."

"No legal business of your own?" he inquired, with a smile.

"No, sir, no legal business."

"Well, if you have any business you may state it at once, as I am quite busy."

"It is about the boat which your son lent to Robert Rushton."

"I shall not interfere with that arrangement," said the lawyer, misunderstanding his object. "I told your father that this morning," and he resumed his writing.

"I did not come to say anything about that. The boat wouldn't be of any use to me now."

"Why not?" asked the lawyer, detecting something significant in the boy's tone.

"Because," said Halbert, in a tone which he could not divest of the satisfaction he felt at his rival's misfortune, "the boat's completely ruined."

Mr. Paine laid down his pen in genuine surprise.

"Explain yourself," he said.

So Halbert told the story once more, taking good care to make the damage quite as great as it was.

"That is very strange," said the lawyer, thoughtfully. "I can't conceive how such damage could have happened to the boat."

"Robert Rushton doesn't know how to manage a boat."

"You are mistaken. He understands it very well. I am sure the injury you speak of could not have happened when he was in charge. You say there was not only a hole in the bottom, but it was otherwise defaced and injured?"

"Yes, sir; it looked as if it had been hacked by a hatchet."

"Then it is quite clear that Robert could have had nothing to do with it. It must have been done by some malicious person or persons."

Knowing something of Halbert, Mr. Paine looked hard at him, his suspicions taking the same direction as his daughter's. But, as we know, Halbert was entirely innocent, and bore the gaze without confusion.

"I don't see why Robert hasn't let me know of this," said Mr. Paine, musing.

"He was probably afraid to tell you," said Halbert with a slight sneer.

"I know him better than that. You can testify," added the lawyer, significantly, "that he is not deficient in bravery."

"I thought I would come and tell you," said Halbert, colouring a little. "I thought you would like to know."

"You are very kind to take so much trouble," said Mr. Paine, but there was neither gratitude nor cordiality in his tone.

Halbert thought it was time to be going, and accordingly got up and took his leave.

As he opened the office door to go out he found himself face to face with Robert Rushton, who passed him with a slight nod, and with an air of trouble entered the presence of his friend's father.

CHAPTER XI.

ROBERT was forced by Ben Haley's taking possession of his boat to give up for the present his design of recrossing the river.

He felt bound to go back and inform John of Ben's escape.

"He has carried off my gold," exclaimed John, in anguish. "Why didn't you catch him?"

"He had too much start of us," said Robert's companion. "But even if we had come up with him I am afraid he would have proved more than a match for us. He is a desperate man. How much money did he take away with him?"

"More than a hundred pounds," wailed the old man. "I am completely ruined!"

"Not quite so bad as that, Mr. Nichols. You have your farm left."

But the old man was not to be comforted. He had become so wedded to his gold that to lose it was like shedding his heart's blood.

But was there no hope of recovery?

"Why don't you go after him?" he exclaimed, suddenly. "Raise the neighbours. It isn't too late yet."

"He's across the river before this," said Robert.

"Get a boat and go after him."

"I am willing," said our hero, promptly. "Where can we find one, Mr. Dunham?"

"There's one about a quarter of a mile down the stream—Stetson's boat."

"Let us go then."

"Very well, Robert. I've no idea we can do anything, but we will try."

"Go! go! Don't waste a moment," implored the old man, in feverish impatience.

Robert and Mr. Dunham started, and were soon rowing across the river in Stetson's boat.

"Whereabouts would he be likely to land?" asked the farmer.

"There's my boat now," said Robert, pointing it out. "He has left it where I usually keep it."

Quickly they rowed alongside. Then to his great sorrow Robert perceived the malicious injury which his enemy had wrought.

"Oh, Mr. Dunham, look at that!" he said, struck with grief. "The boat is spoiled!"

"Not so bad as that. It can be mended."

"What will Will Paine say? What will his father say?"

"Then it isn't your boat?"

"No; that is the worst of it. It was lent me by Will Paine, and I promised to take such good care of it."

"It isn't your fault, Robert."

"No, I couldn't help it, but still it wouldn't have happened if it had not been in my charge."

"You can get it repaired, so that it will look almost as well as new."

If Robert had had plenty of money this suggestion would have comforted him, but it will be remembered that he was almost penniless, dependent on the fish he caught for the means of supporting his mother and himself. Now this resource was out of. The boat couldn't be used until it was mended. He felt morally bound to get it repaired, though he was guiltless of the damage. But how could he even do this? One thing was clear—Mr. Paine must at once be informed of the injury suffered by the boat. Robert shrank from telling him, but he knew it to be his duty, and he was too brave to put it off.

But first he must try to find some clue to Ben Haley. He had now a personal interest in bringing to justice the man who had made him so much trouble. He had scarcely got on shore than the boy who had sold Ben Haley the hatchet strolled up.

"Who was that man who came across in your boat?" he asked.

"Did you see him?" asked Robert, eagerly.

"To be sure I did," said Tom Green, with satisfaction. "I sold him my old hatchet for money enough to buy a new one, and he gave me a shilling besides for my trouble."

"I wish you hadn't done it, Tom," said Robert, gravely. "See what he has done with it."

Tom Green opened his eyes wide with astonishment.

"What did he do that for?" he asked.

"To be revenged on me. I'll tell you what for another time. Now I want to find him. Can you tell me where he went?"

"No; I left him here while I went to buy a new hatchet."

The old hatchet was found under a clump of bushes. Robert took possession of it, feeling that he had a right to it, as part compensation for the mischief it had done.

"Well, better go to the railway station, Mr. Dunham," he said. "He'd be most likely to go there."

"You're right. We'll go."

They walked rapidly to the station, but too late, of course, for the train. The station-master was standing on the platform, superintending the removal of a trunk.

"Mr. Cross," said Robert, "I want to find out if a particular man left by the last train. I'll describe him."

"Yes," said the station-master, "that's the man I was wondering about. He had a wound in the shoulder."

"He got that wound from me," said Robert.

"You don't say so?" returned the station-master, in surprise. "He said he was out shooting with a friend, and his friend's gun went off accidentally."

"I don't believe he feels very friendly to me," said Robert, smiling. "He's stolen a hundred pounds in gold from old John Nichols."

"It'll about kill the old man, won't it?"

"He feels pretty bad about it."

As no other course suggested itself Robert determined to give information to a justice of the peace, and leave the matter in his hands. But justice in a country town sometimes moves slowly, and it may as well be stated here that before anything was done Ben Haley was out of danger.

This business attended to, Robert bent his steps to Mr. Paine's office.

This brings us to his meeting with Halbert Davis at the door. He was slightly surprised at the encounter, but was far from guessing the object of Halbert's call.

Mr. Paine looked up as he entered, and had no difficulty in guessing his errand.

"What can I do for you, Robert?" he asked, kindly.

"I bring bad news, Mr. Paine," said our hero, boldly plunging into the subject which had brought him to the office.

"It's about the boat, isn't it?" said the lawyer.

"What! do you know about it?" asked Robert, in surprise.

"Yes; a disinterested friend brought the news."

"Halbert Davis?"

"The same. He takes a strong interest in your affairs," added the lawyer, dryly. "Now tell me how it happened."

Robert gave a full explanation, the lawyer occasionally asking a question.

"It seems then," he said, "that you incurred this man's enmity by your defence of Mr. Nichols' money?"

"Yes, sir."

"It was incurred in a good cause. I can't blame you, nor will my son. I will get Mr. Plane, the carpenter, to look at the boat and see what he can do to repair it."

"Some time I will pay you the cost of repairs, Mr. Paine. I would now if I had any money, but you know how I am situated."

"I shall not call upon you to do that," said the lawyer, kindly. "It was not your fault."

"But the damage would not have happened if Will had not lent the boat to me."

"That is true; but in undertaking the defence of Mr. Nichols you showed pluck and courage which most boys would not have exhibited. I am interested, like all good citizens, in the prevention of theft, and in this instance I am willing to assume the cost."

"You are very kind, Mr. Paine. I was afraid you would blame me."

"No, my boy, I am not so unreasonable. It will save me some trouble if you will yourself see Mr. Plane and obtain from him an estimate of the probable expense of putting the boat in order."

Robert left the office, feeling quite relieved by the manner in which his communication had been received.

A little way up the road he overtook Halbert Davis. In fact, Halbert was waiting for him, expressly to get an opportunity of enjoying his discomfiture at the ruin of the boat.

"Hullo, Rushton!" he said.

"Good-morning, Halbert!"

"Are you going out in your boat this afternoon?" asked Halbert, maliciously.

"You know why I can't."

"I wonder what Will Paine will say when he knows the good care you have taken of it?"

"I don't believe he will blame me when he knows the circumstances."

"You are not fit to have charge of a boat. I suppose you run it aground."

"Then you suppose wrong."

"You won't be able to go out fishing any more. How will you make a living?"

"Without your help," said Robert, coldly. "You will probably see me out again in a few days, if you take the trouble to look."

"How can you go?"

"Mr. Paine has asked me to see Mr. Plane about repairing the boat."

"Is he going to pay the expenses?"

"Yes."

"Then he's mad."

"You'd better not tell him so, or he might give you a lesson in politeness."

"You're a low fellow," said Halbert, angrily.

"You are welcome to your opinion," returned Robert, indifferently.

CHAPTER XII.

ROBERT saw the carpenter, according to Mr. Paine's instructions, but found him so busy that he would not engage to give his attention to the boat under a week.

The delay was regretted by our hero, since it cut him off from the employment by which he hoped to provide for his mother. Again Mrs. Rushton was in low spirits.

"I am sorry you couldn't agree with Halbert Davis, Robert," she said, with a sigh. "Then you could have stayed in the factory, and got your wages regularly every week."

"I know that, mother, but I am not willing to have Halbert bully me, even for a place in the factory."

"Then, Robert, you quarrelled with the man you took across the river."

"I think I did right, mother," said Robert.

"Don't get out of spirits. I don't expect to succeed always. But I think I shall come out right in the end."

"I am sure I hope so."

Mrs. Rushton was one of those who look on the dark side. She was distrustful of the future, and apt to anticipate bad fortune. Robert was very different. He inherited from his father an unusual amount of courage and self-reliance, and if one avenue was closed to him he at once set out to find another. It is of this class that successful men are made, and we have hopes that Robert will develop into a prosperous and successful man.

"I am sure I don't see what you can do," said Mrs. Rushton, "and we can't live on what I make by braiding straw baskets."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Robert. "I'll go on the hill and pick blackberries; I was passing a day or two ago, and saw the bushes quite covered. Just give me a couple of baskets and I'll see what I can do."

The baskets were provided, and Robert started on his expedition. The hill was not very high, nor was its soil very good. The lower part was used only to pasture a few cows. But this part was thickly covered with blackberry bushes, which this season were fuller than usual of large-sized berries. Robert soon settled to work, and picked steadily and rapidly. At the end of three hours he had filled both baskets.

"That's a pretty good afternoon's work," he said to himself. "Now I suppose I must dispose of them."

He decided to ask sixpence a quart. Later in the



[A MEAN REVENGE.]

season the price would be reduced, but at that time the berries ought to command that price.

The first house at which he called was Mr. Paine's. He was about to pass when he saw Hester at the window.

Pride suggested "She may despise me for being a berry-vendor," but Robert had no false shame.

"At any rate I won't be coward enough to try to hide it from her," he said to himself.

Accordingly he walked up boldly to the door, and rang the bell.

Hester had seen him from the window, and she answered the bell herself.

"I am glad to see you, Robert," she said, frankly. "Won't you come in?"

"Thank you," said our hero, "but I called on business."

"You will find my father in his office," she said, looking a little disappointed.

Robert smiled.

"My business is not of a legal character," he said. "I've turned hawker, and would like to sell you some blackberries."

"Oh, what nice berries! Where did you pick them?"

"On the hill."

"I am sure mother will buy some. Will you wait a minute while I go and ask her?"

"I will wait as long as you like."

Hester soon returned with authority to buy four quarts. We suspect that she was the means of influencing so large a purchase.

"They are sixpence a quart," said Robert, "but I don't think I ought to charge your father anything."

"Why not?"

"Because I shall owe him, or rather Will, a good deal of money."

"I know what you mean—it's about the boat."

"Did your father tell you?"

"Yes, but I knew it before. Halbert Davis told me."

"He takes great interest in my affairs."

"He's a mean boy. You mustn't mind what he says against you."

Robert laughed.

"I don't care what he thinks or says of me, unless he persuades others to think ill of me."

"I shall never think ill of you, Robert," said Hester, warmly.

"Thank you, Hester," said Robert, looking up into her glowing face with more gratification than he could express. "I hope I shall deserve your good opinion."

"I am sure you will, Robert. But won't you come in?"

"No, thank you. I must sell the rest of my berries."

Robert left the house with two shillings in his pocket, the first fruits of his afternoon's work. Besides, he had four quarts left, for which he expected to find a ready sale. He had not gone far when he met Halbert.

The latter was dressed with his usual care, with carefully polished shoes, neatly fitting kid gloves and swinging a light cane, the successor of that which had been broken in his conflict with Robert.

Our hero, on the other hand, we are obliged to confess, was by no means fashionably attired. His shoes were dusty, and his bare hands were stained with berry juice. He wore a coarse straw hat with a broad brim to shield him from the hot sun.

Those of our readers who judge by dress alone would certainly have preferred Halbert Davis, who looked as if he had just stepped out of a band-box.

But those who compared the two faces, the one bright, frank, and resolute, the other supercilious and insincere, could hardly fail to prefer Robert in spite of his coarse attire and unfashionable air.

Halbert scanned his rival with scornful eyes. He would have taken no notice of him, but concluded to speak in the hope of saying something disagreeable.

"You have found a new business, I see," he said, with a sneer.

"Yes," said Robert, quietly. "When one business gives out I try another."

"You've made a good choice," said Halbert. "It's what you are adapted for."

"Thank you for the compliment, but I don't expect to stick to it all my life."

"How do you sell your berries?"

"Sixpence a quart."

"You'd better call on your friend, Miss Hester Paine, and see if she won't buy some."

"Thank you for the advice, but it comes too late. She bought four quarts of me."

"She did!" returned Halbert, surprised. "I didn't think you'd go there."

"Why not?"

"She won't think much of a boy that has to pick berries for a living."

"I don't think that will change her opinion of me. Why should it?"

"It's a low business."

"I don't see it."

"Excuse my delaying you. I am afraid I may have interfered with your business. I say," he called out, as Robert was going on, "if you will call

at our house, perhaps my mother may patronize you."

"Very well," said Robert. "If I don't sell elsewhere I'll call there. It makes no difference to me who buys my berries."

"He's the proudest beggar I ever met," thought Halbert, looking after him. "Hester Paine must be hard up for an escort if she walks with a boy who sells berries for a living. If I were her father I would put a stop to it."

The same evening there was a concert in the Town Hall.

A free ticket was given to Robert in return for some slight service.

Mr. Paine and his daughter were present, and Halbert Davis also. To the disgust of the latter, Robert actually had the presumption to walk home with Hester.

Hester laughed and chatted gaily, and appeared to be quite unconscious that she was lowering herself by accepting the escort of a boy "who picked berries for a living."

The next day Robert again repaired to the hill. He had realized four shillings from his sales the previous day, and he felt that picking berries was much better than remaining idle.

Halbert's sneers did not for a moment discompose him.

He had pride, but it was an honourable pride, and not of a kind that would prevent his engaging in any respectable employment necessary for the support of his mother and himself.

Returning home with well-filled baskets, he walked a part of the way on the railroad, as this shortened the distance.

He had not walked far when he discovered on the track a huge piece of timber, large enough to throw the train off the lines.

How it got there was a mystery.

Just in front there was a steep descent on either side, the road crossing a valley, so that an accident would probably cause the entire train to be thrown down the embankment.

Robert saw the danger at a glance, and it flashed upon him at the same moment that the train was nearly due.

He sprang to the timber, and exerted his utmost strength to dislodge it.

He could move it slightly, but it was too heavy to remove.

He was still exerting his strength to the utmost when the whistle of the locomotive was heard.

Robert was filled with horror as he realized the peril of the approaching train and his powerlessness to avert it.

(To be continued.)



[THE LETTER.]

WINIFRED'S DIAMONDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Charmed Rubies," "The Baronet's Secret,"
etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

Often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.

Coleridge.

PUNCTUALLY at the hour of nine that morning breakfast was laid in the pleasant library, the French windows of which looked out upon the long and narrow strip of greensward reserved by the builder from the contamination of brick and mortar, and called by him a garden.

At half-past nine the hall-bell rang, and the household assembled for family prayers. The countess, glancing round the room to see if all the servants were there, looked with a slight frown at the vacant seat of Mrs. Hughes. Had it been any one else the great bell would have been rung again, and the offender publicly reprimanded on his or her tardy appearance. As it was she said nothing, and the earl, who left these matters entirely to her, opened the family Bible and read the chapter for the morning without noticing that one of his heretofore most constant listeners was absent.

During the half-hour of breakfast that followed close upon prayers the countess was unusually silent. She ate little, just trifling with a cup of coffee and a French roll, while she glanced over the little pile of letters beside her plate.

The earl read his morning paper, ate an egg, and drank a cup of tea, according to his usual habit; and Lady Winifred, after reading, with brightened eyes and crimson cheek, the little rose-scented *billet-doux* that had fallen to her share from the post-bag, ate her breakfast with the healthy appetite of happy girlhood.

When they rose from the table the earl retired to his private study to answer his letters, while the countess came up and laid her hand on her daughter's shoulder.

"Well, dear, did your letter please you?"

The girl looked round at her with a bright blush and a smile of assent.

"It was from Hugh, mamma. Would you like to see it?"

"No, dear; but I want you to come to my room for a few moments, if you can spare the time."

Lady Winifred followed her mother at once as she went up the stairs and entered a little boudoir the door of which opened from the dressing-room. This

was the private apartment of the countess, where even her daughter or her husband was expected to announce his or her entrance by a knock.

"Sit down on that ottoman, my love," said the countess, sinking into an easy-chair with a look of utter vexation. "Such a disagreeable thing has happened—I would not have had it occur for anything just now, as you are going away!"

"What is it, mamma, dear?"

"Hughes came to me last night, my love, and talked in the strangest manner about your marriage. She actually wished me at this late hour to defer it till you have paid that visit you promised this summer to her house. Did you ever hear such an extraordinary notion? Because I would not hear of doing such a thing she left me in a sulky fit last night, and I suppose it has not worn off yet; for she was not in attendance at prayers this morning, though she knows what a point your father makes of it with every one. He did not notice her absence, it is true, but it worried me very much. I do wish she had not taken it into her head to be angry just as the wedding is coming off. I relied so much on her judgment and taste about the breakfast, and I wanted her to go away with you as your personal attendant—she would have been so useful to you at the lakes."

"I am afraid I may, perhaps, be a little in fault," said Lady Winifred, smiling.

She related the story of the nurse's visit to her room late on the previous night, and the almost quarrel that took place which had been changed at last into a peaceable parting. Hearing this, the countess looked even more worried and perplexed than before.

"What kind of notion can she have got into her head? I never heard anything so extraordinary in my life. Does she think Hugh is going to beat you, or what ails her?"

"I am sure I don't know, mamma. But she is probably more seriously offended with me than with you, for in my anger I positively ordered her to leave my room."

"You did quite right, my dear, if she forgot herself so far as to make it necessary. One cannot bear everything from a person in that position, even if she is one's foster sister or nurse. I am sorry though that it has happened—more sorry than I can say. Everything will go wrong about the wedding, from first to last, if she refuse to see to it, as she probably will. Who to get here in her place I'm sure I do not know."

"Cannot some one else see to the things in her place?"

"Some one else! My dear child, don't talk foolishly, I beg of you. Every other woman in the

house will have her head and hands full of business from now till the morning of your marriage. And I know no one out of the house who would be capable of taking her place for five minutes, even if I could make up my mind to ask any one to do so."

"Well then, mamma," said Lady Winifred, rising to her feet with a laugh, "there is only one thing to be done."

"What is that, pray?"

"I must inform nurse what an important being she is to be in the day's pageant, and get her to play her part amiably."

The countess shook her head.

"We will see, mamma, dear. In spite of all her anger she is very fond of me, and may relent when she finds how unhappy she will make me if she persist in shutting herself up away from us like this. I am going to her now, so you may wish me good luck if you please."

She bounded off along the corridor till she came to Mrs. Hughes's door, at which she knocked.

No answer came. She knocked again, then a third time.

Still all was silent. She tried the door. It was not locked. The handle was difficult to turn, but after one or two attempts she succeeded, and stood within the empty room.

At first she thought the nurse had gone downstairs to breakfast in the servants' hall, but, as she turned to go, the open doors of the wardrobe and the great trunks standing therein caught her attention.

The trunks were heavy—they were locked—and on their canvas tops were fastened cards, bearing her address at South Wales.

That was all; but that was enough to show the young girl that her once faithful friend and attendant had fled from her father's house without leaving one word to explain her sudden departure.

Wondering much at such a strange proceeding, she returned to her mother's room and told her what had happened.

"Gone away? Gone away without leave or warning?" said the countess, looking singularly perplexed. "What can it mean? There is something wrong somewhere, my dear Winnie, though what it is it is beyond me to comprehend. I must confess that I should prefer letting it go without attempting to solve the enigma only that I feel it my duty to find out whither your nurse has gone and why. If she was twenty years younger I should accuse her of romance in taking this strange step—but there is something beyond romance in the matter now."

"Shall I tell papa and ask him to help us?" inquired Lady Winifred.

"Not for the world, child. You must not breathe a syllable about the matter before him till we know more respecting it. If he were to know that nurse had gone in this way he would be suspecting her of all kinds of iniquity, and I have neither the strength nor the ability to combat any such opinions now. Say nothing in the house either till after dinner, for she may return and give us all a great deal of trouble before we are through with the business. Now, pray be cautious, Winifred, about this."

"I will, mamma. I assure you I will, only don't look so anxious and worried," the young girl hastened to reply.

She might well feel apprehensive about her mother. The hale, robust countess, with her fair hair and wild-rose complexion, had met many a real trial with more courage and elasticity than she manifested over this ill-natured freak of a vexed servant.

"Her trunks were marked and packed, you say?" asked the countess after a little pause.

"Yes, mamma."

"Perhaps she really is going to leave us—going home in high dudgeon simply because I refused to put off your marriage long enough to allow you to accompany her. Well, it can't be helped, my dear. Of course I could not listen for a moment to such an unreasonable request as that, and I cannot see why she should have expected me to do so. And it is so unkind and thoughtless of her to go in this abrupt way without leaving one word of message for me."

"Mamma," said Lady Winifred, whose bright eyes were bent upon the floor.

"Well, love?"

"I do believe here is a note for you. It has been slipped under the door, and you brushed it away with your dress when you went out this morning."

"Let me see."

She held out her jewelled hand for the paper with a thrill of apprehension for which she could not account.

The letter was written hurriedly and blotted here and there as if tears had fallen on the page. It ran thus:

"MY LADY,—You will call me unkind and ungrateful to leave you like this, but I cannot help it. I have a terrible duty to perform, and I must be away from your house—not eating your bread or resting beneath your roof if I would have strength for that duty."

"Oh, my lady, if you had only listened to me and allowed our darling—she is mine even more than yours—to go with me, this need not have been. Down in my quiet little home I could have talked to her, or if need be I could have told all in such a way that she and you would have understood me while the world remained in ignorance. Nothing need have been changed then; everything must be changed now."

"Forgive me when the time comes. You have driven me to it and I cannot help myself. I cannot see her going away from me for ever without saying what I have a right to say."

"Oh, I am a wicked and a miserable woman! You and she may yet shudder at my name and wish you had never seen my face. Yet forgive me if you can. I am doing right at last, and it is very, very hard."

"SARAH HUGHES."

Lady Winifred read this extraordinary letter over her mother's shoulder, then they turned and looked in each other's face with wondering eyes.

"Mamma, what can she mean? She must be beside herself to write like that. Her brain must be turned," exclaimed Lady Winifred. "Poor nurse; I do wish I knew what stupid idea she has taken into her head."

Meanwhile the countess sat considering, leaning her head upon her hand. She felt inclined to look more seriously upon the letter than her daughter did. To her there was a solemn warning in every line, though she could not imagine to what that warning referred.

She knew Sarah Hughes so well, had known her so intimately from her earliest childhood, that she was sure the letter had not been written without a reason; she felt certain that every word had been weighed and considered before it was written, and that its meaning was probably even more weighty than she knew.

She felt ill at ease. Some danger evidently threatened her happiness, and that of her darling child. From what quarter the danger was to be dreaded none could say.

Some act committed by Sarah Hughes was evidently to be the prelude to such domestic discomfort. So much they knew. For the rest they sat blindly in the dark, awaiting the moment when the bolt should fall.

Presently Lady Winifred looked up from her reverie with a new expression in her eyes.

"Mamma, dear, she says that something strange and terrible is about to happen. Ought I—is there any need of my marriage being put off?"

"No, my child. Only one thing could make that necessary, and that, thank Heaven, is impossible. If Sarah Hughes was the possessor of any secret that touched the honour of your father or your mother, and threatened to make that secret public, then indeed it would be your duty to pause, if not to break off your marriage entirely. But of me she has no knowledge that the whole world is not welcome to share, and your father's life has always been a public and a thoroughly honourable one. So there is no need to put off the marriage for a single day. We will let everything go on in the usual way, and encounter whatever is to come as only those can meet it whose consciences are perfectly clear."

"You will say nothing to papa about the letter?"

"Nothing, my love."

"I must not mention it to Hugh?"

"On no account. He would not understand the thing in the least, and he could not help having, in his own mind, some injurious suspicion of your father or me. No, dear; let the matter rest quietly. Perhaps we shall hear nothing more of it. If we do not so much the better; if we do I trust we all know how to meet whatever may come upon us with courage and fortitude, the more so when it is sure to come through the fault of other people and not through our own."

"And the servants?" said Lady Winifred, hesitatingly.

"I shall say quietly to the housekeeper that Mrs. Hughes is absent on business for a day or two, and may not return before she goes to Wales, in which case her boxes are to be sent after her. Nothing more will be necessary on my part. Of course the servants will talk and wonder about it, but that is not my affair, thank goodness. Should there ever be a time when servants' tongues are not constantly running about all they see and hear we shall have arrived at the millennium; I for one do not expect to live to see that day."

The countess rose, put the mysterious letter away in her escritoire, rang for the housekeeper, and gave her the message; and when she had left the room tapped her daughter lightly on the shoulder and kissed her forehead.

"Now, love, don't sit dreaming there any longer about what may be, but attend to what is. We will think no more of that stupid letter at present. I must go to your father now, and you had better go downstairs. It is nearly time for Hugh. Hark! there is his knock. He always flies at that poor knocker as if he would tear it from the door, and so get to you a little quicker, my dear."

Lady Winifred smiled and blushed, arranged her ringlets before the Psyche glass and then went down to meet her lover. The library was always sacred to their interviews—the earl and the countess generally being within call, if wanted, in the private study close at hand.

So the bombshell which Sarah Hughes had left behind her had failed to explode and return its list of killed and wounded. Or did she not mean it to explode as yet?

All through that day and the week that succeeded it she was busy in the city lodgings which she had taken for a time. She did not go near Bute Street—in fact she avoided the west end of the town altogether, and kept herself closely to the city, feeling sure that she would never be followed or recognized there.

She shopped a great deal in the Borough and in St. Paul's Churchyard. She laid in a store of fine cotton cloth, she bought delicate hose and slippers, handkerchiefs, gloves, collars, cuffs and laces, and all the minor parts of a lady's wardrobe. Then she purchased a silk dress or two of subdued colour and rich material, three or four gingham and as many merinos for winter wear, a cloak, a bonnet trimmed with blue and adorned with the smallest and prettiest of apple blossoms.

Surely at her time of life she was not going to wear such a bonnet as that! It would not have been suitable for her even at the grand wedding the following week, which doubtless she meant to attend. And that dainty cloak of silver-gray, lined with palest blue; those gray kid gloves, those fanciful slippers with their rosettes and spangled knots and little absurd red heels, could it be possible that—

Stay! Of course these things were all meant for that long-neglected daughter in Wales, whom the mother had left for years for the sake of her fair, aristocratic nursing, and to whom she was returning at last, tired of the world's ingratitude, and ready to find a solace for her declining years in such affection as her daughter could be brought to bestow upon her.

It was a kindly thought of the absent and almost forgotten one at last. Yet she went about her task of shopping with a strange reluctance for so good a deed. In fact there was something strange and unnatural in her whole manner—something which her landlady and even the attendants who served her in

the shops could not help noticing and remarking upon.

She troubled herself little, however, about them or their remarks, but went steadily on with her shopping till she came to the end of the list she had made out, and filled two large trunks—similar to her own at Apreece House—that she had purchased and sent to her lodgings. Once filled, she locked them, drew the canvas covering over their tops, and affixed a card like that on her own, and sat down with folded hands to view her completed work.

All this while not one word of tidings from Apreece House had reached her in the outer world. She glanced eagerly at the morning paper each day, but saw no notice there of a marriage deferred. Evidently her letter of warning had been read and thrown aside with a careless laugh. So much the worse for them—since it hardened and strengthened her heart in the purpose she had formed.

The next Wednesday, the marriage day, dawned bright and sunny as human heart could wish. Mrs. Hughes dressed herself carefully in her well-brushed black silk, put on a clean cap, collar and cuffs, and a new pair of neatly fitting kid gloves. Then, inviting her landlady to go with her to St. George's, to see a fashionable wedding, she sent for a cab, engaged the driver for the morning, and drove off to Hanover Square, in order to get the seat she wished for before the wedding party should arrive.

CHAPTER IV.

Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
Her snaky crest. THOMSON.

MRS. HUGHES, as may be imagined, found no difficulty in effecting an entrance to the church, though to make certain of securing the particular seat in the edifice which she wished for she divided five shillings between the beadle and his assistant, who straightway conducted her and her friend to the coveted place.

The matter arranged satisfactorily, they took their seats in time to witness two grand weddings before the party from Bute Street arrived.

St. George's, Hanover Square, was in its glory on that eventful day. A crowd of people was drawn up in front of the church—another crowd at the back in the little cross street from which issue the carriages after the weddings are over, and there huzzas, and shouts, and jests, and the mad clanging of the bells, all mingled together in the bright, sunshiny air as one couple after another whirled away to begin the voyage of life on their own account and together.

Meanwhile at Apreece House all was bustle and confusion.

The bride was being dressed in her own room by her mother, her maid, and two of her most intimate friends, who were to act as bridesmaids.

The other six young ladies who had been chosen to play that important part rustled about in the ante-room in all the glory of white tulle and blue ribbons, and fanned themselves in a fidgety kind of a way, and said to each other how shocking it would be if they should reach St. George's too late. It was positively eleven o'clock now, and it would take them quite twenty minutes to get there. What could Lady Winifred be thinking of?

But the clock in the ante-room must have been a little fast.

It was quite fifteen minutes more before Lady Winifred appeared, to take the arm of her father and lead the way to the carriages. Yet they drove up to St. George's in excellent time, meeting the last wedding party whirling homeward at the corner of the street.

The church as a matter of course was full, for all Lady Winifred's fashionable friends who were or were not invited to the grand breakfast at Apreece House made it a point to go and see her at the altar.

Mrs. Hughes and her companion found themselves invaded ere long by a detachment of ladies in peach-coloured *moirés* and white kid gloves, who looked scornfully askance at the two occupants of the pew, as if wondering what on earth they were doing there.

But the plebeian landlady, strong in the memory of the silver pieces which she had seen with her own eyes paid for their seats, stood her ground with the utmost composure.

And Mrs. Hughes had other things to think of just then besides the impertinence of a few fashionable dames like them.

Faster and faster came the invited and the uninvited guests.

The beadies at the door in their gold-laced coats, and with their gilded sticks, had as much as they could do to keep order, while a detached staff of police were busy on the pavement and among the carriages.

Soon it was made manifest that the bridal party was approaching.

The church was crowded to its utmost capacity above and below. Flowers bloomed, ribbons waved, and jewels flashed, whichever way you looked. In fact the edifice itself was more like a brilliantly variegated flower-bed than anything else—for there were very few gentlemen present, and the ladies with their gorgeous attire had it nearly all to themselves.

A few seconds elapsed, and then the procession entered.

Lady Winifred leaned on her father's arm. She was dressed in Honiton lace over white satin, with a wreath of orange flowers confining the veil that fell backward over her golden ringlets and down to her very feet.

Her face was very pale when she entered, but as she raised her eyes and beheld the crowded church a faint flush tinged her cheek, thus adding the one thing wanting to her perfect beauty.

Amid the deep hush of the surrounding multitude they passed up the aisle and ranged themselves before the altar.

A bishop was to marry them. He waited there in full canonicals, supported on either side by a dean, one of whom was uncle, the other cousin to the noble bride.

The church was silent as the grave. You might have heard a pin fall as the bishop opened his prayer book and began to read the service aloud.

He had concluded the opening address and began the solemn adjuration:

"I require and charge ye both (as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed) that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in holy matrimony ye do now confess it; for be ye well assured that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow are not joined together by God, neither is their marriage lawful."

Who was listening to these solemn words? Every one, after a fashion, of course, as they might listen to any other part of the service.

But who gave to them any special or awful meaning—who dreamed, for a single moment, that they could have any bearing upon the progress of the ceremony—that they would meet with any answer?

Not one of that gay bridal party—not one of all the guests assembled to do them honour!

Only a middle-aged woman in a black dress and shawl and bonnet, who rose slowly in a chancel pew, and during the pause which the bishop made, as a matter of course, after the adjuration, said, in a strong yet slightly tremulous voice:

"My lord, I know of an impediment to this marriage."

A sudden stir and rustle took place, and every one turned to look at the intruder.

Then a long, terrible pause ensued, for no one knew exactly what to say or do. People are never prepared for such events in real life, though they are continually happening.

The countess, roused from a happy dream as she stood watching her beautiful child at the altar, started forward, and looked eagerly towards the speaker.

The next moment she grasped her daughter's arm and exclaimed:

"Great Heaven! It is Hughes!"

Pale with the consciousness of some impending calamity—they knew not what—the two women clung closely to each other and waited and watched.

The bishop, recovering from a stupor of surprise, turned towards the stout, dark woman, who stood amid that shrinking group of gaily dressed ladies looking straight at him—not at the bridal party beyond.

"What impediment exists? What is its nature?" he asked, coldly and sternly.

To tell the truth he looked upon the woman as some drunken impostor, though he was obliged to listen to and question her by virtue of his office.

Mrs. Hughes hesitated but for a moment. She passed out of the pew, followed by her bewildered companion, who thought that she had suddenly gone mad—passed out and stood in plain view of every one—a quiet, respectable-looking upper-servant kind of a person, with honest sorrow stamped upon every feature of her face.

"The impediment!" said the bishop again, and this time a little impatiently. "Time is fast going—do not interrupt the ceremony for nothing."

"The ceremony cannot go on till I have spoken, my lord," she answered, firmly. "The impediment is this. The bride is not the daughter of the Earl and Countess of Llangallen."

The countess shrieked.

"Great Heaven! I see it all—all!" she cried, and, falling back in violent hysterics into the arms of her husband, was carried into the vestry.

Hugh Rhysse approached Winifred and placed his arm around her waist. She looked into his face with

a little sad smile, but did not repulse him—then turned to the woman with a stern, proud air.

"Speak quickly!" she said, in an imperious tone. "Whose child am I?"

"Mine! My own!"

Lady Winifred turned white, and would have freed herself from her lover, but he held her fast and would not let her go.

"Explain this!" said the bishop, with an air of authority.

"My lord, you see that Lady Llangallen understands it already. But I will tell you all—I came here to-day on purpose to do so. I was Lady Llangallen's foster sister, my lord. I was young and pretty, and early in life I was married to a man I loved dearly—but he cared little for me—he was far above me in station, and he deserted me before my child was born.

"The countess also married, and became a mother. Her child was delicate. I nursed it at my cottage in Wales along with my own. At seven years of age the child of the countess met with an accident which made it deformed for life. It was by no fault of mine, but I dared not tell her. It was her only child, and I knew that she would never forgive me in her heart, never cease to believe that some carelessness of mine had caused the accident.

"My own child was bright and healthy and beautiful. I sent her to the countess for her own. I made arrangements for the comfort of the other infant, who was so weakly that no one expected it to live, and then I came to London to look after my foster child—as I called it—my own in reality.

"I have kept silence all these years, but lately—quite lately—I have been brought to see how wicked I have been, what a crime I have committed.

"I did my best to have this marriage put off. If the countess or my child would have but listened to me I meant in time to confess all, and in a more private way than this. But they would not listen to my pleading—they angered and wearied me, and now I am here to-day in public to tell the truth and save my soul.

"That beautiful girl at the altar is Winifred Gwendoline Hughes, my own lawful child. And in my cottage in Wales lives Mary Apreece, the lawful daughter of the Earl and Countess of Llangallen.

"I swear that this is true, before Heaven, in whose presence we are all now standing."

She lifted her right hand on high as she spoke, and no one who gazed on her face could doubt the truth of her tale.

Lady Winifred—alas! Lady Winifred no longer—freed herself now from her lover so decidedly that he was forced to let her go.

Pale and still she stood apart, not looking at her new-found mother or the wondering crowd.

Home, rank, title, wealth, friends—the love of those whom she had called her parents—and of him who had been so nearly her husband—all were taken from her by that one terrific blow.

Yet she did not faint or weep—she only stood like a marble statue of a fair young bride, with the orange flowers on her brow and the long veil falling in graceful folds to her very feet.

Hugh Rhysse kept silence but for a few moments. Turning to Mrs. Hughes, who still stood near the altar with her eyes fixed upon the child who had no look or word for her, he said:

"Is your husband living?"

"I do not know. It is years since he left me—before she was born."

"You know nothing of him?"

"I do not."

"Then no one except yourself has any authority over your daughter?"

"No one, sir," she replied, looking at him with some curiosity.

"Have I your consent to this marriage? Are you willing that your daughter should be my wife?"

A rustle and stir pervaded the church. Was this the proud Hugh Rhysse asking the consent of a woman like that to his marriage with her daughter?

Mrs. Hughes looked at him earnestly, and tears came into her dark eyes.

"You have my consent, sir, with all my heart," she said, softly.

He turned to the bishop.

"My lord, there is time yet. The clock has not struck twelve—it wants some minutes yet. Let the ceremony proceed."

He held out his hand towards the statue-like Winifred.

"Come, my love," he whispered; "you are just as dear to me as ever you were. It was not your rank or your wealth that I wanted, but you; and your mother gives her consent."

The bishop looked at them with no little perplexity.

"I hardly know what to do. If this woman's story is true—"

"My lord, what can that matter?" cried the impatient lover; "I have her consent, as well as that of the countess and the earl; and there can be nothing wrong or illegal about it. Pray proceed, my lord!"

"Stay, my lord," said Winifred, drawing back from the altar. "This must not be. It is generous and noble on the part of this gentleman, and I shall never forget it, but I cannot marry him. My place in life is not now by his side—but here."

She passed by her lover as she spoke and stood by her mother's side. The poor woman gave one glance into her face.

"Oh, forgive me, and love me a little, my daughter," she sobbed.

"I forgive you, mother! Be at peace and come with me," said the young girl, gently.

She took her mother by the arm, bowed low to the astonished group at the altar, and turned away.

Into the vestry they went, and there Lady Llangallen, recovered from her paroxysm, threw herself in an agony of grief into Winifred's arms.

"Oh, my love—my darling—my poor, dear, injured child! What are we to do? Where is that wicked woman? Oh, why do you bring her here?"

"Hush, hush!" said Winifred, soothingly. "She suffers deeply as well as the rest of us. Be calm now, and let us all go home together, and talk this over. I must leave you and go with her—but, oh, not just yet, not just yet," and her forced composure failed her suddenly, and she burst into a flood of bitter tears.

The crowd outside stared aghast when a weeping group descended the steps of the church—when no bells struck up a triumphant peal—and when the gold-laced bandages charged among them with their canes to stop their ill-timed huzzas, and tell them to keep silence till the carriages had rolled away.

The coachmen and footmen stared also as the grand carriages that had swelled the bridal train were now ordered homeward without a thought of the wedding-breakfast laid out for naught in Bute Street.

The earl's carriage rolled swiftly through the streets with its blinds drawn down. The door of Apreece House stood open, awaiting their arrival, and servants with white favours and smiling faces thronged the hall as they alighted.

"Take your congratulations away—there has been no wedding," one of the footmen managed to whisper to the butler as he came up the steps.

The next instant the smiling throng had vanished, and the sorrowful family group went slowly up to the great drawing-room together.

The earl rang the bell when he reached the room, and the butler, with a grave face, answered it instantly.

"Tompkins," said the earl, wiping his face, "that breakfast laid out in the room below—"

"Yes, my lord."

"Clear it away—give it to the servants—and never let me hear anything of it again."

The butler bowed and vanished.

Suddenly the door was thrown open. Hugh Rhysse, looking pale and haggard, came in without having been announced.

"Forgive me, Lady Llangallen," he said as he went and sat down by Winifred; "I cannot but feel that I have a right to be here, and I know you will allow me to stay."

"Certainly, my boy," said the earl, consolingly. "Heaven help us all on this unlucky day!"

Winifred sat apart, pale and silent. She knew what her one duty was in life now, and had made up her mind to it past the possibility of changing.

(To be continued.)

TRACES of pit-coal have been discovered on the western coast of Africa, at a short distance from the island of Zanzibar.

PORTABLE LIGHTNING CONDUCTORS.—It has been suggested that during a thunderstorm every person should carry his or her own lightning conductor, in the shape of a light pole 15 ft. in length, fitted with copper wire, which should terminate in a point at the top and a good stout spike at the bottom. These poles, we may suggest, might also be fastened to the heads or tails of horses, donkeys, cattle, sheep, dogs, and other valuable animals, to say nothing of cats, parrots, and pet monkeys.

AMERICAN COAL.—A powerful body of manufacturers are forming a company for the purpose of bringing over American coal. It is believed that coal can be imported from America at a considerably less price than they are now paying, and if this project should succeed it will have a very important influence on the coal market. If our manufacturers can obtain coal from America it will relieve our own collieries from the strain now put upon them, and thus cheapen the price of coal to the domestic consumer. The promoters of this project for importing American

coal are now engaged in making careful inquiries as to the cost of raising and conveying it to this country. The scheme also contemplates the emigration of a large number of miners from England to America.

WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE Dowager Countess of Mortlake was the richest woman in the circle which she glorified. Mortlake Hall, just out from London, was her summer residence. Then she had her town mansion in St. James's Square, and her villa in Switzerland, and an old country house away up amid the Scottish hills, called "Havenswood."

No other woman had such jewels, such exquisite and costly laces, such satins and brocades; no peer in the realm drove a finer carriage, or paraded handsome horses in the park than did the dowager countess.

And with all this grandeur she was a queer little old woman, who wore a black dress, a high turban, and enormous green spectacles, and always carried a cane, with a priceless jewel in its golden head, with which cane she struck the floor furiously on the slightest provocation.

She was very old and childless, and her nearest relative, Sir Bayard Broughton, was her heir prospective.

But the dowager was very whimsical and eccentric, and in view of her anticipated demise and fat legacies her favour was courted in the most assiduous manner.

She was godmother to Lord Strathspey's twins, and to celebrate the event of Lady Marguerite's *entrée* into London society she gave a grand ball.

On the day before the important event was to take place she summoned the earl and his daughter into her august presence.

"Sit down here," she said as the young lady courted before her, indicating a footstool near at hand with her jewelled stick; "and, Lord Strathspey, do you draw up your chair. I'm about to make you a proposition."

The earl obeyed with alacrity.

"Now," began the countess, tapping her gold snuff box, and taking a pinch of its contents, "I want to know what are your prospects for the girl there? Whom is she to marry?"

The earl smiled, while Marguerite flushed to the roots of her golden hair.

"She is so young, such a child yet," he replied, "that I haven't given the matter a thought."

"You haven't? Just what might be expected of a man. And you're going to plunge her into London society, where, before the season's over, her pretty face will win her a score of lovers. And she'll be sure to pick out a penniless vagabond for her choice. Girls like her always do that. Now, Angus Strathspey, if you want to save yourself a deal of trouble, and your girl a broken heart maybe, pick out a husband yourself, and let her know who he is before you introduce her into society."

The earl bowed, and pretty Pearl blushed pinker every moment.

"I have got the whole thing arranged," continued the countess, "if you agree to it. I intend to leave your children something, as I am their godmother—or I intended, I may say. I can't tell whether that scape-grace son of yours shall ever touch a penny of my money or not. He's a black sheep, with not a look of the Strathspeys about him. I should not wonder if that crazy wife of yours had some method in her madness after all."

The earl winced as if a keen blade had pierced him, and made a protesting gesture, but, taking no notice, the dowager went on:

"That's not to the point, however. I may leave the boy something and I may not; that depends upon how he turns out. But I'll leave the girl here my entire fortune, estates, and everything, provided she'll take Bayard Broughton for her husband."

She paused a moment for an answer, but Pearl had covered her face with her hands and the earl remained gravely silent.

"Bayard's my relative," she went on, "and a fine young fellow, though he's as poor as a church mouse, and it would be wrong to give him nothing. But I like your girl, and I've set my heart on seeing them man and wife. Say the word now, and I'll have the deeds drawn up at once. I don't mean she shall wait till I'm dead; the day she marries Broughton she shall come into possession of everything, and me besides, while I live; I'll be their kill-joy," she added, a grim smile accompanying the rapid descent of her jewelled stick. "Come, Strathspey, what do you say? Can't you speak?"

The earl glanced at his daughter, and, pale and affrighted, she crept to his side and hid her face on his shoulder.

"What shall I say, pet?" he whispered.

"Oh, dearest papa!" she sobbed, "I can't leave you—I love no one but you!"

"Pshaw! that's all moonshine," put in the dowager, striking with her stick impatiently; "don't cry like a baby now, and spoil your eyes. You won't have to leave your father, he can live with you. What do you say?"

"Let me have time to consider—let me see the young baronet first," said the earl.

But the countess brought down her stick with a decided

"No!"

"Now or never! I give you ten minutes," she said, drawing out her watch, and laying it before her; "at the end of that time I withdraw my offer."

She caught up a silver bell, and rang it violently. A French servant maid flew to answer.

"My jewel-case!" demanded the countess.

The maid set it before her, and retired.

"Now," said the countess, as she unlocked it and threw back the lid, "see there!"

Pearl uttered a cry of girlish delight as she beheld the dazzling contents. Diamonds like stars of living light, milky pearls in strings and in clusters, sea-green emeralds and blazing rubies, garnets, and amethysts, set in every conceivable form and design met her gaze.

"They are yours," said the dowager, curtly.

"You may take them home with you, and array yourself in them; and to-morrow night I'll present you to the London world as my heiress. What do you say? Only two minutes now!"

Despite his own rank and wealth, the earl was dazzled. It was an enviable position for his child. The young man, as he remembered him, was agreeable and handsome; she would learn to love him in time.

"What shall I say, Lady Pearl?" he questioned.

"Just what you please, papa," faltered the blushing girl.

"Then she shall marry Broughton," said the earl.

"Done!" cried the dowager, bringing down her stick. "Girl, you shall be Countess of Mortlake! Take your jewels!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE earl and his daughter returned to Grosvenor Square, and a footman followed in a private carriage, bearing the casket of jewels; and while her father sought Lady Neville, to make her acquainted with the details of the compact into which he had entered, Marguerite sat down to examine them with a girl's admiring delight.

Lady Neville was pleased beyond all expression. She did not personally know the young baronet—he had been abroad for years; but the fact that her niece was to inherit all the vast wealth of the dowager countess caused her to be content with the husband that accompanied it, no matter what manner of man he might be.

As soon as she had learned all particulars she hurried to her niece's chamber with her congratulations.

Marguerite sat in a great chair, with the open casket on an ornate stand in front of her; the light from the window transmuting every costly stone into a blazing star.

Lady Neville fairly gasped as she caught sight of the jewels.

Then, with an exclamation of delight, she caught her niece to her bosom.

"My dear child," she cried, kissing her again and again, "you cannot tell how glad I am of this! I congratulate you with my whole heart. Why, you are the richest woman in England."

Pearl sobbed a little, clinging to her aunt's shoulder, then she said, with flushing cheeks:

"But, dear aunt, the—I mean Sir Bayard Broughton! I never saw him in my life. What if I don't like him? What if he doesn't like me?"

"Oh, nonsense," replied her aunt; "you must like him, Pearl. You know, my dear, a girl can like any man she pleases, provided he is a gentleman; and you must like Sir Bayard—there's no retracting now. As to his not liking you, there is but little fear of that. With your beauty and your dowry you will be the star of London. But the matter is settled, and requires no farther discussion; and as the ball takes place to-morrow night let us give a little attention to your toilet. By-the-bye, I have succeeded in getting a maid for you this morning—a nice young person, and highly recommended. Ring the bell, my dear."

The new maid came in answer to the summons—a tidy young woman, with a pretty, pleasant face, and soft, steady brown eyes.

"This is your young lady," said Lady Neville, indicating her niece. "What did you tell me your name was?"

"Janet, your ladyship—Janet Burns!"

"Ah, yes. Well, Janet, I trust you will do your best; you will find Lady Marguerite very kind, and not hard to please."

The young woman courtesied, and struggled hard to keep down some strong emotion that threatened to master her; her lips trembled, and her eyes, as they rested on pretty Lady Pearl, swam with tears. Lady Neville, observing it, asked, in amazement:

"Why, my good girl, what in the world affects you so?"

Janet flushed with embarrassment.

"I beg your pardon, my lady," she stammered, "but my young lady there looks so much like some one I used to love; but it is over now."

Lady Neville frowned and shrugged her shoulders; she was not fond of scenes or sentiment, and though the new maid's emotion decidedly out of place.

"Well, never mind your young lady's looks," she said, haughtily, "and spare us any exhibition of sentiment, I beg! Now, if you have quite done," she continued as Janet dried her eyes, "I should like you to bring those cases from the adjoining room."

"Ah, me! she's a chip of the old block, is my Lady Neville," muttered Janet as she hastened to obey.

"Now, Marguerite," said Lady Neville as Janet removed the lids, "you may choose your ball-dress—these are just from Paris. Take them out, Janet, and hold them up."

A pearl-white *moiré-antique*, heavy with priceless lace, was followed by a sky-blue tissue of the finest silk covered with a mist of something that shone like hoar-frost, and looped in graceful folds with wreaths of snowdrops, every tiny blossom having a shimmering diamond-drop in its heart.

At sight of this last marvel of Parisian skill Lady Marguerite uttered a cry of delight.

"That shall be my ball-dress, Aunt Neville," she exclaimed. "Oh, was ever anything so perfectly lovely?"

Lady Neville smiled.

"Chosen just like you," she said. "The white *moiré* is twice as elegant and three times as costly. However, you shall please yourself. The blue tissue it shall be, with your hair in light curls, and let me see, what about the jewels?"

"The pearls, aunt," suggested Marguerite, turning to the casket, and lifting a lucid string in her white fingers.

Lady Neville shook her head, and looked into the casket with serious eyes.

"Your taste is exquisite, child," she remarked; "the pearls would suit your dress, but the countess would not be pleased. You must make your *début* in the Mortlake diamonds, and such diamonds," she added, raising the tiara, flashing with luminous stones from its roseate bed; "their equal cannot be found outside the royal casket. Pearl, you are a fortunate girl."

Meanwhile, in her dressing-room, with her jewelled stick at her knee, and her gold snuff-box close at hand, the Countess of Mortlake was scribbling the following characteristic lines to her nearest relative:

"Sir Bayard Brompton," she wrote, "you are an ill-bred churl; you haven't come near me in five years, and I've half a mind to cut you off with a shilling. Have you been watching day by day for a notice of my death? But I'm not going to die yet; and when I do it'll be none the better for you unless you do my bidding."

"My title and estates are all my own, without entail, and you'll never get into your possession one penny unless you come here to my ball to-morrow night and obey me to the letter."

"Angus, Earl of Strathspey, has a daughter, and I have made her my heir, with this provision, that she shall take you, Bayard Broughton, for her husband. Now, on the other hand, provided you come down and consent to the arrangement, I will make you my heir also. You see it is a joint concern, you two as man and wife shall have the Mortlake title and property. Refuse to marry her, fail to make your appearance to-morrow night, and I'll cut you off. You remember enough of me to know that I mean what I say."

"I enclose a cheque for a thousand pounds—no doubt you are in need of it."

This she signed and sealed, and directed to the baronet's club, and then, tapping her gold snuff-box, she fell to meditating:

"I trust the vagabond's in London," she mused; "likely enough he's off again on one of his everlasting tramps. A travelling artist! Faugh! and he a Broughton! Pretty vocation, truly! As poor as a church mouse, and as proud as Lucifer! 'Twill be just like him, if he is in London, to ignore the whole arrangement, and to take himself off to the Antipodes. He's lacked bread in the last five years, I've no doubt, and I suppose he'd starve outright rather than come to me for help. Let him then; what's not worth asking for is not worth having."

CHAPTER XXX.

FROM the club-room the letter which bore the coronet of the countess on its seal was forthwith sent to Sir Bayard Broughton's bachelor apartments in Regent Street. The baronet was not in, but his friend and companion, Colonel Richard Brooke, was.

The rooms were pleasant, but by no means luxurious, for Sir Bayard was not encumbered with surplus cash; yet they wore an air of taste and refinement, and were thoroughly littered with the appurtenances of an artist.

Pictures in every style, and every conceivable design, lined the walls; half-completed sketches were scattered in every corner, and paints and brushes lay about indiscriminately. In the midst of all this, on the afternoon in question, Colonel Richard Brooke lounged upon the sofa in the baronet's sitting-room, puffing a choice Manilla.

A servant entered and deposited the letter in the card-basket that stood on Sir Bayard's writing-desk. The colonel stretched himself, got up with a yawn, and crossing the room proceeded to examine it.

"The coronet of the countess, by Jove!" he ejaculated, as his eye fell on the crested seal. "What the deuce is up now, I wonder? Is the old dowager about to stump up, and make Broughton her heir? She will make him her heir sooner or later," he continued, a sudden gleam lighting his eyes, "and I shall not get a shilling. Yet I am as much a Broughton as he is. I wonder that he never suspects who and what I am. His illegitimate brother! I hate him and her, and all the name and race of them!"

He ground the words out through his set teeth, and began to pace the floor in rising anger.

A tall and stately gentleman was this Colonel Richard Brooke, a soldier of fine repute, and the chosen friend of Sir Bayard. They had met years before, when the baronet was on one of his tramps away out in India, and had grown to be fast friends. The basis of this friendship, no doubt, was the strange and striking resemblance that existed between the two. Twin brothers could not have been more alike in their general appearance, yet they were wholly dissimilar in character and disposition.

They got to be great friends. Sir Bayard travelled with the colonel's regiment, and the colonel got furlough, and came to England by the same ship with the baronet, and they loved and trusted each other in a very Damon and Pythias like fashion.

They had been but a day or two in London when the letter from the Countess of Mortlake arrived at the rooms in Regent Street, and the baronet was absent, having run down into Sussex to see a brother artist.

Colonel Brooke paced the floor and puffed savagely at his Manilla, eyeing the crested letter at intervals with ill-repressed curiosity.

"I should like to know its contents," he muttered, at last, advancing to the writing-desk, and taking up the letter again; "why shouldn't I know? I've as good a right to know as he! By Heaven, I will know," he burst forth at last. "I have not followed him all these years, and watched his affairs, to draw back now! I will know!"

He sat down before the desk, and, taking a knife from his pocket, proceeded to cut the seal in so skilful and dexterous a manner that the impress of the coronet was not defaced. He drew out the crumpled sheet and ran his eyes over the crabbed and scribbled lines, a dark red flush mounting to his forehead as he read.

When he had finished he returned the sheet to the envelope, adjusted the seal, and put back the letter in the card-basket.

"Her heir," he muttered, at last, crossing to the window; "her heir, and husband to an earl's daughter!"

His breath came deep and hoarse, and the veins stood out on his forehead like great cords. For a full hour he remained at the window, staring down into the street below. Then he returned to the sofa, as if the intensity of his reflections had wearied him.

"My opportunity has come," he muttered, "now, or fail for ever! I wonder if I could do it? A risky job it would be, but I've a cool brain and a strong will, and Leonard is true and tried. By Heaven I will," he cried, with sudden determination; "'tis worth the trial, and if I fail I fail, that's all. But I must bestir myself," he added, with a laugh; "the ball comes off to-morrow night, and by eight Sir Bayard will be back from Sussex. What's done must be done quickly."

He arose, and, striding across the room, gave the bell-rope a vigorous pull.

In two minutes his valet entered.

The colonel signed him to a seat.

"Leonard," he said, quietly, "would you like to make ten thousand pounds?"

The valet's black eyes twinkled, and he grinned until his white teeth glittered wickedly.

"Shouldn't mind it much, colonel," he replied.

"So I thought," resumed the colonel; "well, there's a chance, and if you've a mind to try it I'll unfold the plans."

"I'll try it, colonel, I'll try it," cried Leonard, rubbing his hands together in anticipation; "you know me, the tougher the job the better it suits me."

His master nodded and smiled.

He knew his man, and he trusted him as he did his own heart.

They were old friends, and had served each other many a good turn in days gone by; true and tried friends were Colonel Brooke and his valet.

"Well, in the first place, there's not a breath to lose—what's to be done must be done at once."

Leonard nodded.

The colonel crossed the room and took up the crested letter.

"Here is a letter from the Countess of Mortlake," he said; "she writes for Sir Bayard to come to a ball to-morrow night; to-morrow night, you hear, Leonard, at her residence in St. James's Square. He is to be made her heir, and to be presented to a daughter of Lord Strathpey, which daughter is to be his future wife. A rare bit of luck, you see, my man, for Sir Bayard Broughton."

Leonard nodded understandingly.

"Now for the point, I am Sir Bayard Broughton. To-morrow night I shall go to the ball of the countess and receive my bride at her hands. And now your job comes in. A man went down to Sussex on Monday, and will return to London this evening—a man who fancies that he is Sir Bayard Broughton, and prospective heir to the dowager countess. Leonard," and Colonel Brooke faced his valet, a strange, subtle light in his pale, gray eyes—"Leonard, that man must not return to London to-night, nor ever any more—do you understand?"

The valet's eyes lit with a responsive flash, and he smiled, showing his gleaming white teeth through his dark beard.

The colonel went on:

"Do your job effectually, and the hour that I come into possession of the Mortlake estates you shall have ten thousand pounds, Bank of England money."

"And what if you do not come into possession of the Mortlake estates?" questioned Leonard, shrewdly.

"Then we shall both remain beggars," returned the colonel. "But I shall come into possession—there's nothing to hinder me if you do your job in the right way."

Leonard rose and held out his hand.

"'Tis a bargain," he said; "good-bye!"

The colonel grasped it heartily, and Leonard vanished.

(To be continued.)

FIGHTING WITH FATE.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MOMENT of the deepest silence succeeded Honor's act of placing her marriage certificate in the hands of Sir Hugh Tregaron.

The young baronet stood up and the folded paper trembled in his hands. Perhaps some faint suspicion of its contents had come to him, for there was a stern glitter in his gray eyes that was like the flashing of a sword in the sunlight. Then, without a word, he unfolded the rustling paper, and read, still in that dead, strange silence, the certificate of the marriage between Honor Gilt and Darrel Moer.

He read it as if it had been a certificate of burial, or a death warrant.

His face was white as death when he had finished it. The paper fluttered from his hands to the floor. For once in his life, with all his nerves of steel, he could not conceal the appalling emotion by which his soul was tortured.

Honor stood before him, as awaiting sentence, drooping, and frightened at the visible tokens of his anguish. She trembled as with an ague. Her face was downcast, and Sir Hugh's eyes rested only upon her crown of pale gold hair.

She expected reproaches and angry words, but still he did not speak. The silence became still more appalling. It was broken at last by the girl's low, pitiful sobbing.

Sir Hugh moved a step nearer to her, as if to take her to his heart. Then he stopped short, and his arms fell to his side.

"Honor," he said, in a broken voice, which yet thrilled with a tenderness and love that even death could not have destroyed, and whose strength he had not himself fully known until now, "this man has then a right to visit you whenever he will? You are his wife?"

Honor recoiled as if she had received a blow. She looked up, her eyes burning like black stars from out the dead pallor of her face, and cried, shudderingly:

"Oh, no, Sir Hugh, I am not his wife. I left him at the very altar, and had not seen him since until he came into this room this evening. I do not call myself by his name. I fear him—I hate him—"

"Yet you are his wife!" said Sir Hugh, still in that broken voice. "You married him the day before yesterday."

"Yes, oh, yes! I suppose the marriage is valid, but I wish that I had died before entering upon all this trouble, Sir Hugh."

"Did you not love him when you married him, Honor?"

A scarlet tide flowed into the pure, proud face of the girl and ebbed again as she faltered:

"No, I did not love him. I was grateful to him, Sir Hugh. I liked him, and he might perhaps have won my love in time. I told him I did not love him, but he was very kind, and I—I thought I loved no one else. Oh, I was wrong—wrong!" and she wrung her hands piteously. "But I was so lonely and desolate, and he offered me a home, and love and care. I have been overhauled all my life long, and I am so young, Sir Hugh, and I know so little of the world. Can you wonder that I shrank from going out into the world alone and desolate, and that I turned to the first kindly hand that was held out to me? I was not weak—not cowardly. I think the shock of my changed position must have dazed me. Oh, I must have been mad!"

"What was your position when Darrel Moer proposed to you?" asked Sir Hugh, hoarsely. "Had—had Mrs. Gilt dared to be unkind to you?"

"She had ordered me to leave the Red House within three days," answered Honor, with an uncontrollable bitterness. "She told me that I was a pauper, whom papa—dear, dear papa!—had educated, and she said it was time I earned my own living. I was in her daughter's way at the Red House, perhaps. Mrs. Gilt never liked me from the first hour of her home coming. She was jealous of papa's affection for me. But she never showed herself my enemy until that fatal night—the night that Darrel Moer asked me to marry him. She wounded me, insulted me, stabbed me to the very soul. She taunted me with my dependence. She ended by telling me that I must leave her house within three days, as I have said. My brain seemed on fire. I went out to walk in the fields, and there it was that Darrel Moer found me and asked me to marry him."

"My poor little girl!"

"I would not say 'Yes' then, although he promised me that, as his wife, I should have unlimited ability to befriend the poor and to found schools for ragged children and hospitals for the poor. I thought I might find rest and peace in such a life, and I was tempted to marry him. Yet I asked for the night in which to consider my decision. I went home. Mrs. Gilt called me into the drawing-room. Clarette had had a letter from Cornwall, and her mother told me that—that—the brave voice faltered now, but the girl forced herself to keep steadily on, determined to tell the whole truth—"she told me that you were about to be married to a lady of high rank in Cornwall, and that preparations were being made for your wedding. Don't interrupt me, Sir Hugh. I know now that the story is false, but I must speak of it. I went up to my room, and I looked at the question of my marriage from every side. If I procured a situation as governess, papa would find me and take me back, and there would be trouble at the Red House and gossip in the town. I had a dozen considerations pressing on me—I cannot remember them all now—but in the end I decided to marry Mr. Moer."

Sir Hugh repressed a groan.

"If I had only known—" he murmured.

"The next morning at eleven o'clock," resumed Honor, "I met Mr. Moer at the corner of Ivy Lane, to give him my answer. He was there with a cab and a marriage licence. We drove to the chapel, and were married."

"How came you to leave him at the altar?"

Honor replied by telling him of the appearance of Mr. Carrington in the vestry, of his withdrawal with Moer into the inner room, and of the subsequent conversation which she had unavoidably overheard, and in which Darrel Moer had fully revealed all the weakness, fickleness, and unscrupulousness of his nature.

Sir Hugh hearkened in amazement.

"I fled from Darrel Moer as from a ravening beast of prey," added Honor. "I feel that I am not safe with him. I have no longer respect for him. I loathe him as I would a serpent. His wife! No, no! I will never acknowledge the bond that binds me to him, save in self defence. I have told you my story, Sir Hugh, that you may know that it is all over between you and me. I can imagine no fate that would

have been more blissful than that which would have been mine as your wife. But having said this much I can say no more. This unacknowledged tie binding me to Darrel Moor is none the less a barrier between you and me. I am set apart from all the joys of affection henceforth and for ever. I can hear no more your loving words, Sir Hugh, precious as they were to me. It was my duty to tell you the truth. And now, Sir Hugh, now that all is over between us, I want to tell you that I shall always pray for your happiness, and that I hope you may marry some noble girl who will be all to you that I could have been."

She evidently expected him to leave her now, but he did not go.

While she had been talking to him with a feverish rapidity, her eyes glittering, Sir Hugh had exerted himself to recover his lost courage and self-possession.

There was a yearning tenderness in his voice as he now said:

"You cannot accept this man as your husband, Honor. And indeed I think that he repents his marriage with you, and will not permit you to claim his name. Why did he not declare to me this evening the relationship existing between you and him? Because he preferred to keep it secret. I am sure he does not dream of your brave frankness toward me. You need a friend, Honor, more than you ever needed one in all your life. Darrel Moor is capable of any wickedness, should he find you an obstacle in his path."

"I believe it—I know it."

"Words of love cannot be spoken between us again until you are free," continued Sir Hugh, gravely; "in the present situation of affairs they would be an idle mockery. More, they would be an insult to you. But I will say to you now, Honor, that I shall never take any other woman as my wife. I will serve for you as Jacob served for Rachel, if need be, and longer; I will be your friend—your brother—until the happy day when I can become your husband. In every sorrow, Honor, remember that my heart beats for you alone, and that you are dearer to me than my life. I shall bear about with me always the precious thought that you love me. But all may not be lost, Honor; there may be a way of escape for you from this miserable tangle."

"What possible way of escape can there be?"

"You were married by licence?"

Honor replied in the affirmative.

"Moor must have declared you to be of age, while you are only seventeen. A false declaration of age has often sufficed to break a marriage. Your father could have the marriage set aside. Captain Glint, who stands to you in the place of a father, may be able to procure the annulment of this marriage. I will consult a lawyer upon the subject. When will the captain return?"

"In about two months, Sir Hugh."

"Two months seem an eternity at this crisis. I fear nothing can be done to break the marriage until he comes. He is your guardian, and must act for you. The more I think of the matter, Honor, the more I am persuaded that this marriage can be annulled, and that without scandal."

Honor's face flushed with reviving hope.

"Oh, if it only might be!" she whispered.

"Meanwhile," said Sir Hugh, with forced cheerfulness, "where are you to remain during the captain's continued absence? You cannot go back to the Red House. I do not like you to remain in a lodging-house, exposed to meeting chance comers and goers. Your landlady is not a sufficiently able protector for you should you require protection. I think, Honor, that I had better write to my aunt, who is now in London, and state the case to her. She will offer you a home in her house, and that will be the safest refuge that can be found for you during Captain Glint's absence. Will you consent to this?"

Honor assented gratefully.

"I will write to my aunt by the earliest post," said the young baronet. "You will receive a letter from her by return; I shall write also to Captain Glint immediately, and I shall run down to Liverpool to-morrow and see a lawyer there in whom I have confidence. It will thus happen that you will not see me again until the day after to-morrow. I beg you to be hopeful and brave, Honor, and to be continually on your guard against some possible machinations of Darrel Moor. He is a man to strike in the dark."

"I will be very guarded," said Honor. "Oh, Sir Hugh, I feared that my hasty, mad marriage was to blight my whole life. Will it be so easily set aside that I need no longer lie awake at night in terror of my future?"

"Marriage is a holy institution, Honor," said Sir Hugh, with a grave tenderness, "and it should be entered upon with a full realization of all its solemn meaning. But you were in a manner forced into a

marriage with this man, who cast you off, as one might say, at the altar. That ill-advised act which binds you to a villain—a girl of tender years, he a man in the prime of life and old in wickedness—is an exception to the rule of marriages; but even this strange marriage could not be annulled, nor could you procure a divorce, save for the single flaw in the contract—the flaw being that you are under age, and acted without the consent or knowledge of your guardian. I shall be able to talk to you on this subject more at length after I shall have seen the Liverpool lawyer. The hour is growing late, Honor," he added, as the little clock on the mantelpiece struck ten. "I must go. You cannot be too circumspect now, you know. The world is full of censorious people."

He took her hand in his and pressed it to his lips with a gentle chivalry and a passionate tenderness that would well have become a knight "without fear and without reproach." Even while his manner declared his great and enduring love for her, he bestowed upon her no caresses, and called her by no loving names. It was plain that he would respect her slightest scruples, and would treat her with reverential courtesy, such as a brother might yield her, until the barrier now between them should be swept away, and he should be free before Heaven and man to woo and win her.

He took his leave without lingering, and left the house.

Honor put away her marriage certificate in her desk, and sat down before the fire, the light of hope irradiating the gloom that had threatened to engulf her.

The girl Lucky put aside her book, and went in to the adjoining bedroom to lay out the night garments of her young mistress.

While Honor thus sat alone, her feet on the fender, a brooding happiness in her lovely eyes, her parlour door opened and her landlady came into the room.

Miss Brown was an angular, elderly woman, with rigid ideas of propriety, to which she deemed it the duty of other people to conform.

She was in an exceedingly unpleasant mood at this moment, and the vinegary expression of her countenance sufficiently indicated the fact.

"If I am not intruding, Miss Glint," she demanded, in a peremptory "stand-and-deliver" style, and in an insolent tone, "may I have a few minutes' conversation with you?"

"Certainly, madam," replied Honor, rising and placing a chair for her visitor. "You are welcome to my rooms at all times."

"Even when you are holding drawing-rooms," as I might call them, for all the young men in Southport?" sniffed Miss Brown. "If you will pardon my inquisitiveness I should like to know if you have left Bolton for good? I received you here without references, having known you for years as a very promising pupil in the school with which I was connected. I supposed that as you were looking ill you came to Southport for sea air. I chanced to hear a few words that passed between you and your first caller this evening, and from them I gathered that you are not Captain Glint's own daughter, as I have been led to believe, but that you are an object of his charity. Is this so?"

"It is true that I am not Captain Glint's own daughter, madam, but I am his adopted daughter."

"Humph! There's a great difference between the two," said Miss Brown, severely. "I might almost term your conduct as sailing under false pretences, miss—ah, I suppose I must say Miss Glint. Have you quarrelled with Mrs. Glint? Are you going back to her?"

"No, madam, I am not going back to Mrs. Glint. The Red House is no longer my home."

"Mrs. Glint has turned you adrift, eh?" said Miss Brown, coarsely. "No doubt she had reasons for such a proceeding. It does not speak well for a young lady to be turned out of the home that has always sheltered her. I own I am shocked at your goings-on in my house this evening. It behoves me, as a single lady, without a male protector, to look carefully after my lodgers. You seem to be homeless, and to have no lady friend to look after you, but I have had to dance attendance upon the door knocker the entire evening, to admit your throng of gentlemen visitors. I always liked you at school, Miss—ah, Glint, although you were not in my classes, and I knew comparatively little of you. But, of course, you can't expect me to ruin myself for a person not akin to me. In short, miss—ah, Glint," concluded the landlady, primly, "you'll have to carry yourself and your visitors elsewhere. I desire your rooms to be vacated at the end of the week."

Honor's face reddened, and she replied, haughtily: "I will give up my rooms even sooner, madam. I expect to receive a letter the day after to-morrow, and I shall go up to London the next day. You will

perhaps accept my assurance that your estimate of me is entirely wrong. Circumstances have conspired to deprive me of a home, but I am blameless—"

"Of course—oh, of course!" asserted the landlady. "You are the very pink of propriety. Let me tell you that I am not to be hoodwinked by you. You will leave my house on the day you named, or I will have you ejected according to law. Remember there's to be no delay. If your London letter don't come, out you go all the same. You appointed the day yourself, you remember. Another thing, Miss—ah, Glint. Your gentlemen visitors cannot come under my roof again. I can control my own house door, I believe."

With this exhibition of her temper and vulgarity the virago took her departure, banging the door behind her.

"It seems as if all the world had turned against us, Miss Honor," said Lucky, who had been drawn from the inner room by Miss Brown's loud-voiced harangue. "Where are we to go next?"

"To London, I think," replied Honor. "If my letter come in time, I mean. If it should be delayed I don't know what is to become of us."

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was in a very ugly frame of mind, as may be supposed, that Darrel Moor walked away from Oak Cottage, and hurried down the Manchester road, turning the nearest corner, and proceeded towards the railway station.

His visit to Southport had been a miserable failure.

He had found Honor more beautiful than ever, as it seemed to him, but as cold and inaccessible as an iceberg.

He knew that she had done with him, and that very knowledge kindled anew his old infatuation for her. Sir Hugh Tregaron had well said that Darrel Moor wanted what he could not have, but that when it became accessible he no longer cared for it.

He actually loved her as much as it was in his fickle nature to love any one. He adored beauty, and she was rarely, gloriously beautiful. But even while he loved her, so curiously was his mind constructed or warped, he hated her for her contempt of him, and because she stood in the way of his interests.

He was resolved to destroy every vestige of evidence of his marriage with her, and he was equally resolved to marry Miss Floyd.

He thought of the heiress of the manor now, but he did not think of her with affection. He believed that he had made a favourable impression upon her, and he was anxious to follow it up. She was a stepping-stone to the grandeur which he had thought to possess in his own right, and as such he would make use of her.

His reputation in society was worse than indifferent.

As Lord Waldemar, and the owner of all the property that would go with the title, his vices would have been gilded, and he would have been able to make a grand match.

As plain Darrel Moor, with an income of some two hundred pounds a year, he knew that he would stand no chance whatever to contract a wealthy marriage.

Under all the considerations pressing upon him it was necessary for him to return to Yorkshire immediately. He arrived at the railway station in time to catch the last train, and took his place in a first-class compartment and wrapped himself in his travelling rug, and was soon steaming down the line through the gloomy night.

A spasm of jealousy convulsed him when he remembered that he had left Honor in company with Sir Hugh Tregaron.

"She'll be careful not to let him know of her marriage with me," he thought, judging her by himself. "She means to catch the baronet, and marry him out of hand. We'll see how her little game prospers. If I don't marry Miss Floyd, I'll claim Honor openly. If I do marry Miss Floyd, I shall probably make some disposition of Honor which will be contrary to her present ideas and calculations."

With thoughts like these he pursued his journey to Yorkshire by way of Bolton.

He arrived at Floyd Manor soon after daybreak, and presented himself at the breakfast-table, faultlessly attired, at eight o'clock, with not the faintest shadow of anxiety upon his features.

In truth he was well satisfied with himself, for while he sipped his coffee and talked soft nonsense to the well-pleased heiress his valet Bing, who was his equal in villany, was already on his way to Lancashire with ample instructions in regard to the errand with whose execution his master had charged him.

The man Bing had a melancholy air, and looked like a broken-down curate. He always dressed in black, was fond of wearing a white cravat and a tall

shining hat. He had been associated with his master so intimately as to catch certain of Moer's "airs and graces," and was the beau-ideal in appearance of a gentleman's gentleman. He had materially altered his appearance by covering the lower half of his face with a gray false beard, and wearing spectacles.

On arriving at Southport Bing sauntered forth from the station, valise in hand, and by dint of inquiry found his way to the Manchester road.

There were plenty of cottages and rooms to be let upon either side of the street, but Bing, while scrutinizing each and all of the white placards as one looking for lodgings, kept on until he came to Oak Cottage.

The announcement on the gate, the old tree root in the yard, the absurd little rockery under the windows, all answered to Moer's description of Honor's present refuge.

Bing opened the gate and approached the cottage, twirling a heavy walking-stick with quite the air of a dandy as he walked.

He knocked loudly at the house door, and Miss Brown appeared, opening the door with startling abruptness.

Bing raised his hat to her with exaggerated politeness.

"Excuse me, madam," he said, "but I see that you have lodgings to let. The situation of your house is so extremely admirable that I am persuaded I should feel at home here if the terms are—ah—agreeable. What rooms have you to let?"

"The upper floor, sir," replied Miss Brown, briskly. "Permit me to show you the rooms, sir. Have you any family?" and she eyed him speculatively.

"No, madam. When you see me you see all there is of my family," said Bing, with a melancholy smile. "I stand alone like some—ah, like some solitary monarch of the forest!"

"Oh, indeed!" simpered Miss Brown. "Come upstairs, sir;" and she led the way to the upper rooms.

Bing followed, hat in hand. Miss Brown displayed to him the two chambers directly above the rooms at that moment tenanted by Honor Glint and her maid. Bing inquired the price, including board, and engaged them directly, paying a week's rent in advance.

The rooms under these will be vacant to-morrow," observed Miss Brown. "If you should prefer them you can exchange when the lodger goes away."

"I suppose I can remain now that I am here," remarked Bing, tossing his valise upon a couch. "I am an invalid, madam, and rarely leave the house. You can send me up my meals at the hours most agreeable to yourself. I never like to make a lady trouble," he added, gallantly.

Miss Brown's hard visage softened, and she bestowed a glance that was more than half-tender upon her lodger, whom she shrewdly suspected to be an over-worked curate on a week's outing.

"There are few like you, sir," she replied. "Most people care but little about the trials of their landlady. One would think the mistress of the house was not of the same flesh and blood as themselves. But you, sir, have a feeling heart. If you will drop into my little parlour at any time, I shall be happy to see you, and to offer you a cup of tea."

"Thanks," said Bing, caressing his false beard. "Your parlour is just under this room I understand. I shall be most happy to drink tea with you."

"My parlour is not under this room. It is on the other side of the hall," said Miss Brown, hastily. "The room under this is a private sitting-room, and belongs to a lady lodger."

"Ah, yes," said Bing, "I remember now. Very well, madam, I'll have dinner in my own room, and I'll take tea with you—a most charming arrangement. I do dote upon ladies' society."

Miss Brown tried to coax a blush to her thin, sallow cheek, and retreated in coy and girlish haste, believing that she had made a conquest of her lodger, and not quite certain whether or not she should accept him and sink the lodging-house keeper in the curate's wife.

She came back again a moment later, and said, with a little cackling laugh:

"You forgot to tell me your name, sir. I believe that is necessary, is it not?"

"Oh, it's Watson," said Bing, coolly, telling the truth in part, for he rejoiced in the cognomen of Watson Bing. "And yours, madam?"

"Is Miss Brown—Augusta Feodora Brown," declared the spinster, with apparent pride. "If you should want anything, Mr. Watson, please mention it now. My maid is absent on an errand, and will not be in for an hour or more."

"I shall require nothing, my dear madam," said Bing. "I find myself quite fatigued with my journey from Manchester. I'm a Manchester curate, ma'am, in ill health, and I've a letter in my pocket from my

rector which I beg you to read. I believe I will lie down and sleep for an hour or two."

He exhibited to Miss Brown a letter purporting to be written by a Manchester clergyman, certifying that "the bearer, James Watson," was a curate of high moral character, etc., all of which had a most flattering impression upon the landlady. She made up her mind to win him if she could, and gave back the letter and retired from the room, determined to deepen by all the arts known to her the favourable impression she was positive she had already made upon the lodger.

Bing seated himself by his window, behind the blind, and kept a close and furtive watch upon the garden gate. Some five minutes later he beheld Miss Brown going out with a basket on her arm.

"Just as I expected," he said to himself. "The old niddy has gone to market. She means to get me up a nice dinner. I wonder if she makes eyes at all her gentlemen lodgers. Her servant has gone out. There's no one but Miss Glint and her maid in the house, but I am sure they are here. I'll have to go down and play the brigand. The certificate, or your life—that's it. They are only two girls, but then they might arouse the neighbourhood with their screams. The thing is risky. I'm afraid, after all, I shall have to wait until night, when they will both be asleep."

Yet he kept a furtive watch behind his window blind. He had his reward, for presently the house door was shut and a slender figure in black went down the walk. It was Honor Glint, deeply veiled, and on her way to post with her own hands a long letter which she had written to Captain Glint.

Bing chuckled as she went out of the gate. "She's off for the promenade and the pier head, and is disposed of for an hour or two," he said to himself. "Only the maid remains in the house. This is my chance."

He waited a little while, considering his plans, and then opened the door and stood upon the stair landing. All was still below. He crept down the stairs and peered into Miss Brown's rooms. They were silent and deserted. Then he softly opened the door of Honor's room and looked in. It was also untenanted.

Bing went boldly into the room, locking the door behind him. Then he stealthily peered into the adjoining apartment, but Lucky was not there. A closer investigation assured him that she was in the kitchen, busy with some culinary preparations.

"The coast is clear," said Bing, exultantly. "Now's my time."

He sat to work with a skill and rapidity which a professional burglar might have envied.

He made a survey of the room and its contents. The little portable desk had been locked up in a trunk, which was in the bed-room, and the desired document was safely in this desk. But the jewel-box and dressing-case were in plain sight, and Bing devoted his attention first of all to them, beginning with the dressing-case.

A brief scrutiny convinced him that the paper was not there. He then examined the jewel-box. There were some simple articles of jewellery in it, but no secret compartment in which a paper might be hidden. There was, however, an odd trinket which caught Bing's attention. He took it up and turned it over and over in his hands. It was simply a sphere of black onyx, an inch or more in diameter, superbly polished, and held in a tiny hand of gold which was set with diamond sparks. A loop of gold attached to the tiny band showed that it served as a locket. The ball appeared solid, although of no great weight.

"A queer kind of ornament," muttered Bing.

"Those sparks are paste of course."

He had no time to waste upon anything apparently so unimportant, so he dropped it into the box.

Had he purloined it and taken it to his master—had the secret hidden in its interior, and of which even Honor did not suspect the existence, been brought to light—the whole course of Honor's life might have been changed—ay, and the whole course also of the life of Darrel Moer.

Passing the trinket as of no importance, Bing continued his hasty search. He soon quitted the parlour for the bedroom.

Lucky had been engaged in packing nearly all the morning, and two or three trunks stood open. Bing passed them by, and concentrated his attention upon a trunk which was not only locked but carefully strapped. He undid the fastenings deftly. He was provided with false keys, and soon fitted one to the lock. Then he opened the trunk.

He found in the tray Honor's little writing-case. He opened it with a key of his own, listening intently to every sound that came up from the kitchen. He had not looked the rear door, the key being absent from the lock, and an impulse now came over him to push the bed against it. But he was encoun-

tered with the little desk, and he smiled at his own over-caution, as he heard a sound as of something falling in the kitchen.

"The girl's busy, and a minute more will settle this thing," he muttered. "If the paper's not in here, Miss Glint carries it on her person."

He emptied out the contents of the desk, but the paper of which he was in search did not appear. He turned the case upside down, running his fingers over every protuberance which suggested a secret spring. His shrewdness was rewarded by the discovery of a secret drawer in the very bottom of the box, a sort of false bottom, with only room enough to lay a paper of a certain thickness in it. In this hidden receptacle was concealed the marriage certificate so all-important to Darrel Moer.

Bing seized the document—opened it—glanced over its contents.

"It's all right," he muttered, exultantly. "That's the paper. I'm a rich man. Now to get out."

But before he could disencumber himself of the desk—before he could conceal the paper on his person—in short, before he could even move—there was a soft rush behind him, and the paper was torn from his grasp, and thrust hurriedly into the pocket of Honor's maid, and in the same instant—so quick was the girl's movement—the hands of Lucky Banner had plunged into his beard, tearing it from his face.

Her assault was so sudden and violent that Bing, who was on his knees, was toppled over, while Lucky retreated, the false beard in her hands, shrieking:

"Oh, dear! Help, help! Murder! It's Mr. Moer's man. Police! Help!"

Her screams filled the air, penetrating to the street.

(To be continued.)

PRIDE OF OPINION.—An Italian nobleman is said to have fought sixteen duels upon the question, "Which was the better poet, Ariosto or Tasso?" and being mortally wounded in his sixteenth with his dying words confessed that he never had read either. How many opinions do we perversely cling to which have in reality no more reasonable grounds than the poor Italian's notions upon Ariosto and Tasso!

ALARMING RUMOUR.—We find the belief put forward that the instant the despatches of Livingstone reach the Sultan of Zanzibar and his Arab slave dealers an order will be issued to shoot Livingstone; and, single-handed, what is even this brave old Scot with his rifle against a host of secret foes spread over 4,000 square miles of forest? We hope to hear that another expedition will soon be fitted out, and that it will receive the aid of the Government.

A RIVER OF ICE.—The American papers tell of "an icicle 2,000 miles in length and 200 miles in breadth." This seems worthy of the land of Yankee Doodle. Nevertheless, the statement is substantially true. It appears that since last January enormous fields of ice have been passing the shores of Newfoundland in almost continuous streams. The distance between Baffin's Bay, where the ice-fields are found, and the waters of the Gulf Stream, where they are dissolved, is from 1,500 to 2,000 miles; so that it may be fairly said that a river of ice, varying from 50 to 200 miles in breadth, and 2,000 miles long, has been for months pouring its contents into the tepid waters of the Gulf Stream. This fact may account for our cold and wet spring and late summer.

HESTERCOMBE.—Hestercombe House and estates were sold at the Mart in London, recently, by Messrs. Beadel. Lord Portman became the purchaser at 64,000*l.* The estates comprise about 777 acres, and it is one of the most delightful residential properties that is to be found in the West of England. The property belonged to the late Miss Elizabeth Maria Tyndale Warre for life, and on her death, about six months since, passed to Lord Ashburton, the reversion on Miss Warre's death having, as we are informed, been purchased many years ago by the late Lord Ashburton. It was hoped Lord Ashburton would adopt Hestercombe as a residential property for himself, but should it become the residence of one of the esteemed Portman family the inhabitants of the neighbourhood would be highly pleased. A few years since the late Miss Warre was asked to sell her life interest in the property, but she refused. Had she consented it is said that Lord Ashburton would have built a splendid mansion on the estate for a residence. It is presumed that, on failing to get Hestercombe on the occasion alluded to, Lord Ashburton built the splendid house called Melkshott Court, about six miles from Rousey, in Hampshire, the building of which commenced about six years ago. It is a rather singular circumstance that Melkshott Court was almost entirely destroyed by fire a few days ago.



[THE DISCOVERER OF LIVINGSTONE.]

HENRY M. STANLEY.

It falls to the lot of few men at twenty-nine years of age to achieve such a large measure of well-merited popularity as the subject of our memoir has enjoyed since his arrival in this country. As a distinguished and honoured guest he has been the recipient of flattering encomiums in abundance—rendered additionally gratifying from the high position and talents of those by whom they were conferred, the unfortunate misunderstanding which gave offence to Mr. Stanley at the Brighton Medical Society dinner having been amply atoned for by the speech of Mr. Francis Galton, the President of the Geographical section of the British Association, at their farewell *déjeuner* given by the Mayor of Brighton, Mr. Cordy Burrows.

Proposing the toast of the "Foreign Visitors," and referring to Mr. Stanley, the president said:

"The Geographical section, and indeed the country at large, was deeply indebted to Mr. Stanley for the timely succour he had given to the great African explorer. They were also indebted to him for the numerous and important letters brought from Livingstone, and, lastly, the Geographical section had much to thank him for in the geographical facts which he had himself contributed to them about Lake Tanganyika and other observations of the bearings of the country which with the keen eyes of an American he had noticed. On Friday morning the Economical section were to have occupied their attention with an important discussion on the Higher Education of Women, but the committee decided that it would be better to adjourn that section and come in a body to hear Mr. Stanley's paper. In conclusion he could not help asking Mr. Stanley whether they might hope the paragraph he had seen in one of the newspapers to the effect that Mr. Stanley was not an American was true."

To these gratifying remarks Mr. Stanley replied:

"Before I went into Central Africa I thought the fate of Livingstone was the most interesting topic to Englishmen and geographers; but Mr. Galton in his speech seemed to indicate that my personal biography and adventures constituted matter of greater importance. Let me assure this assembly that Mr. James Gordon Bennett, jun., never told me to go and discover myself, but to find Livingstone. I think it is sheer idle talk to ask for my biography, for I am but thirty years old, and as yet have done nothing of sufficient merit that people should inquire into my personal history. But I wish to take advantage of Mr. Galton's inquiry to say that I am writing a book, and let me advise him, or any one else who wishes to know anything of my past history, to look into my book. For, besides those details, they will find in its pages much about the geographers of England and America, with many geographical facts, but in all they can find in the book they will find nothing sensational I vow. When I came here I was kindly welcomed by Mr. Cordy Burrows, who said there was a house for me, a well-spread table and good wines, and told me to go in and help myself. Going for a walk to see the magnificence of Brighton I came to the Grand Hotel, and then turned back and came to something which made me pause. It was one of the most extraordinary things I ever saw—Rome, the mistress of the world, never had such a thing; Carthage in its greatest glory never had such a thing, and Athens, which ruled the world of art, never saw such a thing—these places did not have an aquarium. Neither Rome, Carthage, nor Athens was possessed of an aquarium, and this was, I believe, the one thing the lack of which brought ruin to the great cities I have mentioned. In the toast you have just drunk I am called a foreigner. It says 'The Foreign Visitors.' In America when we meet an Englishman we do not call him a foreigner. There is not a man, foreigner or not, in this room who feels more love and affection towards the mayor and town of

Brighton than I do. If there be I challenge him—I care not if he comes from Burma, New York, China, or Japan—to stand forth if he can say he is more grateful to the mayor for his kindness than I. I thank you most heartily for the way in which you received this toast."

Despite Mr. Stanley's modest assertion that he had as yet done nothing of sufficient merit that people should inquire into his personal history, the public may well be excused for evincing considerable interest in the antecedents of the man who with praiseworthy promptitude started at small notices at the head of an expedition into the interior of Africa, and by indomitable courage and perseverance penetrated the mystery in which the fate of the great African explorer had been so long enveloped.

From the few facts which have come to light respecting Mr. Stanley's career it will be seen that by nature and experience—having been a traveller to the extent of almost 120,000 miles, or nearly five times round the globe—he was eminently fitted for the task which he undertook and carried to so successful a conclusion.

It appears that early in life he was imbued with a love of adventure. Born in the city of New York in the year 1843, while yet a boy he ran away from school, went to sea, and deserted his ship in the harbour of Barcelona. In swimming to land he lost his bundle of clothes, and in a sorry plight was thus obliged to make his way ashore. He was found by a sentry and taken to the castle, where he was allowed to sleep the night on some straw. In the morning a captain took pity on him, gave him some clothes, and bade him *adieu*, after conducting him through the suburb of Barcelonetta. He started to Marseilles without a copper in his pocket, and though several times in danger of being imprisoned as a vagabond, continued his journey on foot through Southern Catalonia, and finally arrived at the frontier, sustaining himself by asking alms. In France his forlorn appearance attracted the attention of the police, and at the little town of Narbonne, in the department of the Aude, was apprehended, but after a short detention was released. Having received means from his friends upon arriving at Marseilles, he began his travels in a more respectable fashion, visited almost all the ports of Europe, studying as he travelled the histories of the countries through which he passed. The War of Secession breaking out, he returned to his own country, enlisted as a volunteer, was present at the battles of Fort Donelson, Fort Henry, and Pittsburg Landing. His time being up, he engaged as a newspaper correspondent, and thus witnessed several battles on the Potomac, and the capture of Fort Fisher. Peace having been concluded, Mr. Stanley travelled through the western territories, sometimes as a newspaper correspondent, sometimes taking practical lessons in gold mining. After this tour he set out on his return to his home, built a raft, and with a companion of his own age floated down the Platte River to the Missouri River, a distance of over 700 miles. Arriving in New York, his restlessness induced him to endeavour to proceed across Asia, *via* Smyrna, with two American friends. After penetrating 300 miles into the interior, reaching Afium Kara Hisar, he and his companions were robbed of 6,000 dollars by the Koords, and were obliged to go back to Constantinople to get redress, in which they succeeded. Returning again to America, he was engaged by the *Missouri Democrat* and *New York Tribune* to follow the Indian Peace Commissions and Hancock's military expedition against the Kiowas and Cheyemes.

When the Abyssinian campaign began he was engaged by the *New York Herald* to follow the British army. Having shown considerable aptitude and energy during this campaign, he was requested to proceed to Crete and describe the real state of affairs there during the rebellion. Thence he went to the Spanish Revolution, and when that was terminated was ordered to Egypt to await Dr. Livingstone's arrival, who was then reported as coming home. Getting tired of waiting, in December, 1869, he was again sent to Spain to report progress on the Republican revolutionists, and on his arrival in Madrid from the siege of Valencia he received that now famous telegram to "come to Paris" to see Mr. Bonnet, the subsequent circumstances of which we now know well. He had first to attend the inauguration of the Suez Canal, go up the Nile, then to Jerusalem, then to Damascus, Smyrna, Constantinople, Crimea, Southern Russia, Ural Mountains, Trebizond, Tiflis, through the Caucasus to interview Stolotzoff at Bakou, across the Caspian Sea to Krasnovodsk, then through Persia *via* Teheran, Isfahan, Persepolis, Bushire, Bagdad, Muscat, India, Mauritius, Seychelle, Zanzibar, and thus to Central Africa, happily reaching Ujiji but twenty-five days after Livingstone arrived.

Our portrait—taken from a photograph by the London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company—

represents Mr. Stanley in the costume which he wore when he made his unexpected and welcome appearance before Dr. Livingstone, graphically described by himself in his paper read at the British Association meeting of August 16th, from which we extract the following:

"Before I started for Central Africa I knew nothing about that great broad plain in the centre of the continent and I cared less for it. . . . While following my duty in Madrid I received a telegram 'Come to Paris on important business.' I found Mr. James Gordon Bennett, the young manager of the *New York Herald*, in bed, at the Grand Hotel. I knocked at the door. He said 'Come in,' and demanded my name. 'My name is Stanley,' I said. 'Oh, you are the man I want. Do you know where Livingstone is?' I said 'I declare to you I don't.' 'Do you suppose he is alive?' 'I really don't know.' 'What do you think?' 'It is past my comprehension.' 'Well, I think he is alive, and I want you to find him.' I thought it was a most gigantic task, but I did not dare to say so to Mr. Bennett, so I said 'If you send me to the centre of Africa I will go there,' and he said 'Well, go. I believe he is alive and you can find him.' 'But,' said I, 'have you the least idea as to how much that little journey will cost?' He said 'What will it cost?' 'Well, Burton and Speke's expedition cost something like between 2,000*l.* and 4,000*l.*; are you ready to incur that expense?' He said 'Draw 1,000*l.* now, and when that is finished draw another 1,000*l.*, and when that is finished draw another 1,000*l.*, but find Livingstone.' I said 'What is in the power of human nature to do I will do. Good-night.' . . . That same night I was on my way; but first of all I had to go and discover the operations of the Suez Canal; secondly, visit the Temple of Solomon under ground, where you see the marks of the Syrian workmen, then to Constantinople, then to the Crimea, then to the Caucasus, then to the Caspian Sea, Persia, Bagdad, the Valley of the Euphrates, and the Mauritius."

Mr. Stanley then related the difficulties he had in learning the names of the currency among the natives, and the conflicting accounts he received from Arabs of whom he inquired if they knew anything about a white man in Africa. One said he saw one at Ujiji, and he was very fat and fond of rice, and said a white man had been wounded when he was out hunting.

"When I got to Unyanyembe, the central depot of the Arabs, I asked the governor where the white fat man was. He said he lived at Ujiji, and was a great eater of butter. I thought that was good news, and said, 'Do you think he is alive, great master?' 'I don't say he is alive, because there has been a war there,' and he said he had divined on the Koran and found Livingstone was dead. My next point was Ujiji. I had never been in Africa before. There were no railroads, no telegraphs, no balloons, and there was a war raging in the country, and to get to Ujiji I must cut my way through this war country. We went on for two days, but on the third day we made a most disgraceful retreat. All my men deserted me. I then went to the camp of the Arabs, and said there is a war going on, and it is between the Arabs and the natives; I will find my own way to Livingstone. One of them said, 'Oh, great master, you must not do that. I must write to Seyd Berg-hash, the Sultan of Zanzibar, and say that you are obstinate; that you are going to be killed.' 'All right,' said I, 'there are jungles, and if one way is closed we can try another; if that is closed we can try another,' and so on.

"On the 23rd of September last year I started off to Ujiji, and went directly south until I came to the frontier of the adjoining country, and when I came to the corner of it I found there was another war there; in fact I was going straight into it. Then I had to go up north till I came to the salt pans of which Burton speaks. In crossing the river I had such little incidents as an alligator eating one of my donkeys. I came next to a land notorious for its robbers. I had to pay heavy tribute in consequence, so one night I called a council of my principal men and told them I could not stand this tribute-taking any longer, for if I went on for six days at the rate which it had been going for two days I should have nothing left at all. They asked 'What will you do, master?' I said 'Nothing; the thing is to go into the jungle and make direct west.' At the dead of night we went into the jungle, and on the fourth day we stood on the last hill. We had crossed the last stream, we had traversed the last plain, we had climbed the last mountain, and Ujiji lay embowered in the palms beneath us. Now, it is customary in Africa to make your presence known by sounding and firing guns. We fired our guns as only exuberant heroes can do; I said, 'I suppose I shall not find white men here; if I do not we must go across the great Lake Tanganyika, and on to the Manyema country; and if we cannot find him there we must go to the Congo, and

if we cannot find him there we must go to the Atlantic Ocean, but we must find this white man.' So we were firing away, and sounding and blowing horns, and beating drums. All the people came out, and the great Arabs from Musche came out, hearing we were from Zanzibar, and were friendly, and brought news of their relations. They welcomed us, and while we were travelling down that steep hill to the little town I heard a voice say: 'Good-morning, sir.' I turned, and said, sharply, 'Who the mischief are you?' 'I am a servant of Dr. Livingstone, sir.' I said, 'What is Dr. Livingstone here?' 'Yes, I saw him just now. I am his servant,' I said. 'Do you mean to say Dr. Livingstone is here?' 'Sure.' 'Go and tell him I'm coming.' Do you think it possible to describe my emotions as I walked down those few hundred yards? This man, David Livingstone, whom I believed to be a myth, was in front of me a few yards. I confess to you that were it not for certain feelings of pride I should have turned a somersault. I was ineffably happy that I had found Livingstone. 'Finis coronat opus.' It is only a march home; carry the news to the first telegraph station, and so give the word to the world."

HANNAH.

"You might do better, John." Mrs. Williams spoke fretfully, as if the news told to her by her only son was not pleasant for her to hear.

"Better, mother!" What a ringing, clear voice it was!—so strong and hearty, as if to match the tall, stalwart figure, the bright brown eyes, and handsome, sunshiny face of John Williams.

"Better!" and now a hearty laugh rang out. "As if there lived a better woman than Hannah Coyle!"

"But, John, she is only a shop girl." "She won't be a shop girl when she is my wife. I am not a rich man, but my salary will make a comfortable home for all of us."

"She will turn me out of doors, likely enough." "Mother!" cried John, with a quiver of anger running through the surprised reproach of his voice, "you should know Hannah Coyle better than that."

Mrs. Williams's conscience gave her a sharp twinge, for she did know Hannah better than to think she would deprive a crippled old woman of her only home. But Mrs. Williams, like many a fond mother, had nursed such high hopes for the matrimonial prospects of her boy that she felt only a rude shock of disappointment when he told her of his engagement.

"Surely," she mused, after John had left her for his daily routine of duty, "surely John might aspire to something higher than a mere shop girl."

He was well educated, well connected, and occupied a responsible position in the important firm of Howell and Somers.

Mr. Somers especially was fond of John, and had invited him several times to evening parties at his own house. Mr. Somers, besides one son, had a handsome daughter.

It was not visioned in the mother's air castles that Laura Somers was a vain, extravagant and self-willed girl, ill fitted for the wife of a rising man; nor did she stop to think that a respectful bow on the one hand and a condescending one on the other were all the greeting that had ever passed between the young clerk and his employer's daughter. She only loved to sit in a chair, that was her prison, and fancy John the favoured son-in-law of the wealthy merchant.

Now John had announced himself the affianced lover of Hannah Coyle, a young shop girl, who was not even pretty, and probably never owned a silk dress in her life.

"Surely," was the refrain of all this fretful reverse, "surely John might do better."

Just one little week later Hannah Coyle came to the house where she was to have had grudging welcome as its mistress, and, entering softly, went to the crippled woman's chair.

Crouched down among the cushions, seeming to have shrunk to less actual size in her misery, was the fond, proud mother, her frame shivering in convulsive agony, her words always the same:

"Oh, John! my son! my good son! Oh, Heaven, let me die!"

She had been all one long night so moaning, so sobbing, utterly desolate, utterly alone.

The son she idolized, the trusted clerk, the fond, proud lover, was lying in a cell, waiting his trial for forgery. He had been arrested for trying to pass a forged cheque, taken in the very act of attempting to cash it at the bank.

The story he told of its possession was so improbable that it still farther injured him, and gave per-

sonal revenge an additional motive for his punishment.

He said that Gerald Somers, the son of one of the partners of the firm, had sent him to the bank with the cheque. It scarcely needed the young man's indignant denial to contradict this story.

A friend in the same employ had gone to the mother and told the news as kindly and gently as possible. A fierce anger and stout pride had kept the old lady up during that trying interview; but, once she was alone, she crouched among the cushions of her chair, and moaned out the bitter misery of her heart.

There was no strong arm to lift her to her own room that night; there was no hearty, ringing voice to bid her good-morning. The servant who had waited upon her had mysteriously vanished; having heard the words of the friend, she helped herself to all the valuable trifles lying about, and walked off.

Still the feeble voice, freighted with its burden of anguish, moaned its sad refrain when the door opened and Hannah Coyle came in.

No friend had broken the news gently to the young girl, but the shock came rudely upon her from the columns of the daily paper.

It was not in one hour, or two, that she could so conquer her own grief as to leave the house; but when the first battle was over in her heart she went at once where she knew John would have had her go.

So when, faint with her long night of misery, the mother lay moaning, a kind hand was placed upon her shoulder, and a voice clear and strong, but sweet with womanly tenderness, spoke the dearest word on earth, "Mother!" she looked up with haggard, bloodshot eyes, and saw, bending over her, a face that love, pity, and deep, unutterable tenderness had transformed into positive beauty.

"Mother," the sweet, clear voice said, "this is not what John would wish."

The mother's tears, the first she had shed, flowed fast at the sound of her son's name.

"Oh, Hannah," she said, "you do not believe John is guilty?"

"John guilty!" the girl cried, her voice ringing like a trumpet call, her eyes flashing, and her cheek growing crimson. "Mother, how can you put the words together? You know—I know—that he is innocent. Our John a thief and forger!"

"But he is in prison. He will be tried."

"They will let me see him, mother, I think," said Hannah. "But we must work for him, mother."

"How can we work for him?"

Yet, with the doubting question, the mother sat erect, already stimulated by the idea.

"You must tell me who is the lawyer John knew best and trusted most."

"Yes. He has a second cousin, a lawyer, that he thinks a great deal of."

"Where can I find him?"

"The address is in a little book in that table drawer, where John keeps all such memoranda. Look for Jerome Williams."

"I have it. Now, mother, have you had any breakfast?"

"Oh, I can't eat. How can you think of eating?"

"You must eat, and I too, or we can be of no use to John. Mother, until John comes back, will you let me come here to live?"

"Will I let you? Oh, Hannah, you would not leave me now!"

This was the first conversation that drew the hearts of the two women together, but the bond that knit them during the weeks that followed was that of suffering and sorrow that would have torn the heart of the man whom they loved and trusted during his darkest hours. For the trial only separated them more surely and terribly.

Twelve intelligent men, after hearing all the evidence, pronounced a verdict of guilty, and John Williams was sent away for ten years.

It is not in the power of my pen to describe the desolated home to which this news was carried. They never doubted him, even in the face of all the overwhelming evidence that had condemned him, but Heaven seemed to have deserted them when they knew the result of the trial.

I have said that Hannah Coyle was not pretty. Her features were plain, her eyes a soft brown, and she had a sweet mouth, that could smile bravely, and light her face for the invalid's eyes in their darkest hours. But she had one great beauty in her long, heavy masses of hair, of a rich dark-brown—hair whose natural coils were more beautiful than the most elaborate chignon, and hair of which she was fond and proud because John admired it.

"It is my only beauty," she would say, when old Mrs. Williams exclaimed at its profusion, "and I must keep it glossy and pretty for John's sake. He must find his wife unaltered, waiting for him, when he comes home."

This was before the crushing verdict that ended the young clerk's trial, when Hannah was still earning her weekly pay, and Mrs. Williams had

a sum of money yet in reserve for her own expenses.

Fortunately the old lady owned the little house in which she lived, her sole legacy from her dead husband; but, as the weary months crept slowly along, poverty showed its ugly face in the humble home.

Hannah worked faithfully at her old post until Mrs. Williams was taken very ill. Sorrow and anxiety began to have physical as well as mental effect, and the mother bowed down, aged more in one year of separation from her son than she had ever been in ten of their loving companionship.

It was impossible to leave her alone, and the situation at the shop was resigned. Nursing was no sinecure where the patient was so utterly helpless, for Mrs. Williams had had no use of her lower limbs for twelve years, the result of a long spell of inflammatory rheumatism. Nearer and nearer crept the gaunt wall, poverty. Little articles of furniture that could be spared were sold; little comforts were denied; extra hours were given to the poorly paid sewing that replaced Hannah's shop work, and yet actual hunger was staring them in the face.

Nearly two years had John Williams slept in a convict's cell, when one morning Hannah Coyle, leaving her self-imposed charge sleeping, went down to one of the fashionable hair-dresser's shops. Poorly clad, pale and haggard, she waited for some time before the perfumed proprietor deigned to notice her.

"I have come to sell my hair," she said, very quietly, choking back her tears, and thinking "It will grow again before John comes home."

The proprietor led her to the hair-dressing room, and hid his amazement at the superb profusion under a hard, half-contemptuous smile.

"H'm—yes; rather coarse," he said, fingering the rich masses.

"I hoped it was worth something considerable," Hannah said, ready to sink with shame.

It was no part of a bargain to allow a fair price for such a purchase, and when Hannah left the shop only seven shillings had been paid for her closely cropped head. Yet seven shillings would keep life a little longer in the feeble frame of John's mother, and Hannah was thankful.

She was rapidly walking on when she was attracted for a moment by a crowd before a chemist's shop, and her feet seemed paralyzed as she heard a man say:

"I saw his face. It is Gerald Somers, son of old James Somers, firm of Howell and Somers."

"Is he much hurt?"

"Fatally, I should say. One of the horses put his foot on his breast."

"Gerald Somers! Fatally injured!"

Hannah never paused to contemplate possibilities. She forced her way through the crowd into the shop, past the gentlemanly proprietor to the very door of the inner room where the young man lay waiting for death.

"You cannot go in. His physician has ordered every one out but his father."

"I must go in! It is a matter of life and death," she answered. "I must see him before he dies."

Something in that white, earnest face moved the heart of the druggist, and he opened the door.

Upon a low sofa, lightly covered with a sheet, lay the handsome, dissipated son of the merchant prince. Kneeling beside him, looking into the white, drawn face, was the hastily summoned father, and the physician stood at the head of the couch.

They had thought consciousness dead in the still figure, when a clear voice spoke the dying man's name:

"Gerald Somers!"

He opened his eyes wildly, and the clear, sweet voice spoke again in words of solemn import:

"As you hope for mercy in the next world, tell the truth and proclaim John Williams' innocence."

He gasped convulsively, while his father bent over him, and the physician looked inquiringly at the intruder.

"John Williams," the hoarse, dying voice said, very feebly, "was innocent. I did give him the cheque, as he said. I wrote the signature."

"Gerald," cried the father, "is this true?"

"It is true, as I hope for Heaven's mercy."

There was a moment of awful silence. Then the old man turned to Hannah.

"Who are you?"

"John Williams' promised wife."

"Go. I will do him justice. Leave me with my son."

She bowed her head, and went softly from the presence of the dying, thanking Heaven humbly that it had guided her steps that day.

James Somers kept his word. He was an upright man, and he sacrificed the name of the dead to right that of the living. He would not take John back, the sight of his face was too exquisitely painful, but he paid him his full salary for the time of his absence, and found him a lucrative situation.

It was the day of his home coming. Mrs. Williams, in her own chair, was smiling upon John as he caressed Hannah's shorn head. Very grave and pale his sunny face had become in his bitter trial, but a smile brightened it as he heard his mother say:

"It was for me, John, she sacrificed all her splendid hair. I can never tell you all she sacrificed for me, but that speaks for itself."

The smile grew roguish then as, clasping Hannah in a close embrace, he asked:

"Do you think now, mother, I might do better?"

"Not if you could marry an empress."

She thinks so still, and John agrees with her, though he has been married four years, and Hannah's hair is as superb as ever. A. S.

THE LOST BRIDE.

"My good woman, it strikes me that all this theatrical ranting and outcry is quite out of place. I am not to blame because you are poor. I am not responsible because you cannot keep the rent paid. It is very natural that I should want my money, and I have already borne with you longer than most landlords would do."

Mr. Carlyon stood there straight and stately, with features as accurate as if cut in cameo, and cold sparkling blue eyes, in whose depths lingered no single gleam of mercy or forbearance, while diamond studs shone in his spotless linen, and a great ring of brilliant caught the afternoon sunshine in its countless facets.

"But is it true, sir," faltered the Widow Bryan, "what your agent says—that the little bits of furniture, and the bed my Michael died on, is to be seized for the thrille o' rent?"

"I do not know what you call a thrille," said Mr. Carlyon. "It is more than a year since you paid anything; and what my agents say I fully sanction and uphold."

"And my Nelly fadin' into the grave wid you wearyin' o'ough? and the little fatherless child—her crying out for the bit and the sup that I haven't got to give her? Mr. Carlyon, you're a rich gentleman, wid land and wid money, an' they say you're to marry the fairest lady that the sun ever shone on—have mercy on us, as ye'd ask the Good Father to have mercy on you in your time of trouble. Wait just a bit o' time longer; sure I'll work night and day to—"

He shook his head coldly, as he sprang on the milk-white horse that had been impatiently pawing the ground and tossing its snowy mane while the altercation had been going on.

"I have waited too long already," he said. "Further delay I am convinced would be worse than useless."

Mrs. Bryan shook her fist after him as he trotted away down the bridal-path, already obscured by the gathering gloom of an impending thunder-storm. She looked not unlike some avenging fury, with her iron-gray hair blowing about her wrinkled face, and the fierce light of anger glowing in her eyes, while with one hand she held the folds of a picturesque scarlet shawl about her bent and aged form.

With the moan of the rising wind among the trees, and the patter of big rain-drops on the leafage of the dense summer woods, came the echoes of her shrill voice:

"Ay, ride on, with your gay white horse, and your diamonds, Clarence Carlyon; but Heaven's curses will follow you. Ye can't ride away from them, sir, not if ye put a thousand spurs into his sleek sides, nor the curses of a widow, the curses of a dying girl, that can't die in peace for you and yours. It's thrue that we're poor, and have no friends, but Heaven sees it all. Yes, ye're riding straight on to its vengeance! I can see it, though you can't."

Instinctively Mr. Carlyon shook his bridle-rein, and shuddered.

The wind was chill, and Selim, shying to one side at a sudden blue-white gleam of lightning, seemed as glad as his master to get out of reach of the sound of the old woman's infuriated exorcisms.

Mr. Carlyon resolutely put all unpleasantnesses out of his mind, and began to think of Antoinette Dupergue, the beautiful young French hairdresser whom he was the next week to wed.

Mrs. Dupergue was staying at Holyhead Hall, a few miles beyond, where the wedding was to take place, among her friends and relations—for Antoinette was herself an orphan, with no settled home.

Artists raved about her pure, Madonna-like beauty, poets sang lyrics in her praise.

Even sober business men lost their balance when exposed to the wondrous witcheries of her melting, velvet-black eyes, and lustrous, jetty hair, and skin like the creamy chalice of an Eastern Lily.

Clarence Carlyon had won her away from them all. No wonder that his meditations were very bright as he trotted on to Holyhead Hall. No wonder that neither thunder nor lightning nor driving rain had power to chill the warmth of his happy lover heart!

As he approached a gloomy spot in the road—where it took a sudden and abrupt turn, among gloomy cedar copses and dark green thickets of laurel—Selim shied again, so suddenly this time as nearly to unsettle his rider.

In the same instant Mr. Carlyon, looking ahead to discover, through the gloom of storm and tempest and overarching woods, what it was that had so startled his usually trustworthy steed, fancied for one second that Antoinette Dupergue stood at the turn of the road, all in white, with floating jetty curls, and a stalk of white lilies in her hand.

Only for a second, however. The white rush of sheeted rain dissolved the shadowy fancy the next minute, and he saw that the stalk of lilies was only the white clusters of a Clematis vine, which, torn from its clinging supports by the storm, waved wildly to and fro in the air. He smiled to himself to think how nearly he had been deceived by the illusion.

"Gently, Selim; gently, old fellow," he said, patting the horse's neck. "We are both of us inclined to be a little fanciful to-day. If I were at all subject to weakness of nerve," he added, mentally, "I should say that the demonic howls of yonder ranting old woman had unsettled me."

He rode on, and soon reached Holyhead Hall. At the moment in which he checked his steed at the stone portico with its solid flight of hewn steps the sun broke out brilliantly once more.

"A good omen," he said, gaily, to himself.

But the pale, frightened face of Agatha Holyhead at the door told another tale.

"Such a storm!" she panted, "such a fearful storm!"

"Has it been so bad? But what does a little rain amount to?" he cried, flinging his reins to an advancing servant.

"But the lightning has struck down into the woods by the grotto—and—and we cannot anywhere find Antoinette!"

"Agatha," reasoned Mrs. Holyhead, "do not be so foolish. Probably your cousin has been out for a walk—one of her sketching expeditions, most likely—and has taken shelter in one of the cottages down there."

But at that instant an affrighted gardener came rushing up the steps.

"Ma'am, if you please Miss Dupergue is sitting in the summer-house, and she won't answer me!"

Almost before a minute had elapsed Clarence Carlyon had made his way through the dripping shrubberies to the summer-house, one half of whose vine-festooned sides was torn away by the blasting finger of the lightning.

It was as the man said. Antoinette Dupergue sat on the rustic seat, all in white, with a long stalk of lilies in her hand, quite dead!

"Struck by lightning!" gasped her terrified aunt as she marked the single blackened spot, scarcely larger than a pin's head, on the girl's temple.

She sat there almost as if she had fallen asleep among the honeysuckle trails, so pure and peaceful was her face; the very lilies were not disturbed in their whiteness—but she was dead—thrust out of life by the scorching touch of Heaven's fire!

Clarence Carlyon, standing there bowed down by the weight and suddenness of his awful affliction, remembered poor Bridget Bryan's words:

"Ride on, but Heaven's curses will follow you! You are riding straight to its vengeance. I can see it, though you cannot."

The prophecy had come true! A. R.

FACETIÆ.

WILD oats are the only crop that grows in daylight.

The police are said to be like the rainbow, because they never appear till after the storm.

BATHER PERSONAL.—"You look as though you were beside yourself," as the wag said to a fop who happened to be standing by a donkey.

WHAT'S the difference between a watch and a feather bed? The ticking of the watch is inside, that of the bed outside.

A DEFENDANT in a New York court produced a letter from a washerwoman testifying to his good character. This witty stroke of flat irony produced his release.

A DUTCH UNCLE.—The *Oloppoe Gazette*, in its luxuriant advertising columns, has the following *en du couer* from an affectionate nephew: "Dear uncle, are you dead or alive yet?"

THE PUFF DIRECT.—What is the most expensive volume that has been produced of late? A volume of smoke—with coals at two guineas a ton! We are looking anxiously for a cheaper edition shortly.—*Pun.*

BRADSHAW AND STREETUALISTS.—Mediums, who profess to obtain correct information from tables,

have been entirely baffled by the Railway Time Tables. They have tried them, and found they don't answer.—*Punch*.

In the following we see that the editor is discouraged because his wife has a new bonnet. How the state of mind of an editor comes out in his paper at times: "It is said that the millinery shops already display 78325461790531 varieties of bonnets for the present season."

UNDER the heading "He, She, and It," which is a comprehensive way of taking in the whole world's doings, an American contemporary has the following: "Dickens burlesqued aristocracy, and then let them make him a lord." To "He, She, and It," should be added, "and Miss."

HIS AMEN.—A minister made an interminable call upon a lady of his acquaintances. Her little daughter who was present grew very weary of his conversation, and at last whispered, in an audible key, "Didn't he bring his amen with him, mamma?"

GOING BEYOND HIS LAST.

First Rustic: "I say, pa'son pitched 'un hot yesterday about stealin' an' dromkenness, eh, Tum-mus?"

Second Ditto: Ay, did he! Blame his impudence—he be paid to preach gospel, not to git ta'kin' to we like zo!"—*Fun*.

OH, WHERE AND OH WHERE?

Maud: "Bertie, do you know where it is that one sees little boys all dressed in white, and singing?"

Bertie (who has visited his Uncle at King's Coll., Camb., and been to chapel there): "Oh, yes! In Heaven—and Cambridge."—*Fun*.

POETRY AND PROSE.

"Behold, my Flora, how glorious Nature looks in her bloom! The trees are filled with blossoms, the wood is dressed in its green livery, and the plain is carpeted with grass and flowers."

"Yes, Charles, I was thinking of the same thing. These flowers are dandelions, and when they are gathered and put into a pot with a piece of good fat pork they make the best greens in the world!"

ASKING FOR NOTHING AND GETTING IT.—Little Bob begged hard the other day when some friends were dining with us to be allowed to come in and sit at the table during dessert, which I told him he might do provided he neither talked nor annoyed people by asking for fruit. He very readily assented to this condition, which he honestly fulfilled to the letter. At last I heard the poor little fellow crying and sobbing most bitterly. "What is the matter, Bob?" said I; "what are you crying about?" Why, papa, here I am asking for nothing and getting it."

A NASTY COMET.—The tail-star which has been announced to meet and simply pulverize the earth for some time past is recognized by Messrs. Boguslawski and Schiaparelli to be no other than Lexell's, which in 1770 came as near to our globe as 312,000 miles, without even being perceived, or even producing any effect whatever. This comet had already imprudently approached Jupiter too nearly, who deprived him, by gravitation, of a good deal of matter. The dreaded comet is now hundreds of millions of miles from our orb, and all we have to expect in these seasons is a copious fall of shooting stars, which are supposed to be some of the stray portions of the comet.

EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.

Colonel (Indian Army): "Yes, sir, I withdraw my application for the pension, and must remain in the service, expenses are increasing so over here. Coals have gone up from twenty shillings to thirty-six shillings since I wrote. You see, we don't want coals in Bengal."

Secretary (India Office): Price o' coals! tut-t-t-t! Dear me! this will upset all our retirement schemes!"

Mr. P. (an old friend of the colonel's): "I think his grace might raise the pensions for these gentlemen. Name it to him from me, Mr. Secretary, will you, please?" [Exeunt].—*Punch*.

BLACKSMITHING IN GERMANY.

In the interior towns and villages of Germany it has been the custom for many years for the farmer to purchase the iron for his tires and horse shoes, and in some instances, when having a new waggon built, to purchase all the iron entering into the same, the lengths of every piece being furnished him by the smith.

One part of the contract is that the smith shall return to the farmer all ends and cuttings from the iron, and it frequently occurs that the farmer remains at the shop until the iron is all cut up, in order that the smith shall not indulge in too much cabbage.

Each smith shop has what is termed "the hell," and, in cutting off a set of tires, if the farmer be not present, the largest half of the end cut off finds its

way to "the hell," the duty of putting it there devolves upon the youngest apprentice. From this always plentiful store the smith furnishes his material for the manufacture of bolts, horse shoes, etc., for transient customers.

The horse-shoeing part is also a feature; the farmer will bring with him the end of some piece of iron or tire, with which to make the shoes, or perhaps a dozen or more old horse shoes to be converted into new ones. The farmer must blow the bellows until the work is forged or the shoes all made, and must then hold up the horse's foot while the shoes are being driven on or fitted or taken off, and invariably carries the old shoes home with him, unless he prefers to give the old shoes in payment for the apprentice's services in holding up the feet.

"MINE."

THE miser counteth o'er his gold,
'Mid dreams of greed and power;
His heart, a withered thing and old,—
His life a festering hour;
And, gloating o'er the metal's shrine,
He hugs his treasures, muttering,
"Mine!"

The poet weaveth burning songs—
Dear children of his brain!
And round him gather throngs
To list the magic strains;
And, pausing 'mid the glowing rhyme,
His heart exulteth, "Mine! all mine!"

The lover clasps a gentle maid,
So fair, with meek, blue eyes
Softer than night- skies overhead
Where starlights set and rise,
And whispers, while his heart beats time,
"We part no more, beloved! mine!"

The mother bendeth o'er the child
Asleep upon her knee—
I ween the Mary Mother mild
No tenderer wast than she!
"Oh, baby, fond arms these entwine—
Harm cannot touch thee, darling, mine!"

Delusions all! The miser's dreams
Have perished with his gold;
The poet's songs are soon forgot,
He sleeps 'neath graveyard mould;
The lover and maiden pine
Apart—no more each whispers "Mine!"

The little babe hath gone to sleep,
To wake on earth no more;
And gentle tears the mother weeps,
'Mid sob repeated o'er—
"Jesus, thine arms around him twine!
Till Heaven gives back lost baby mine."
Oh, what are honours!—what is gold!—
And what the lover's kiss!
Since fame will die, and hearts grow cold,
And perish earthly bliss!
Only in Heaven 'mid joys divine,
Dare we whisper—"Ever mine!"

M. W. J.

GEMS.

It is one of the worst errors to suppose that there is another path of safety besides that of duty.

A MAN who cannot mind his own business is not fit to be trusted with the business of others.

NARROWNESS of mind is frequently the cause of obstinacy. We do not easily believe beyond what we see.

A FLATTERER, though he may please with his honey-tongued nothings, is despised at heart; while the truth-speaker, though he may offend, is nevertheless feared.

MEN may be negligent in their handwriting, for men may be in a hurry about the business of life; but we seldom find either a sensible woman or an estimable one whose writing is disorderly.

WHENEVER we find a man who enjoys a wide popularity we may be assured, however bad his reputation may be, that he has some good qualities in an eminent degree.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PRESERVING GREEN PEAS.—Take some dry bottles and cork them down tightly, then place a seal over the cork and bury them in the earth in your garden.

PRESERVING FRENCH BEANS.—Wash, cut, and prepare for cooking some young beans, then procure a large-mouthed glazed jar, and put a layer of salt at the bottom about an inch thick, then wipe your beans quite dry, and put a layer of them in, then some more salt, and so on. The your jar down and

keep it in a dry place, soak them in cold water for six or eight hours before you use them, and you will be able to have fresh French beans for your Christmas dinner.

VEGETABLE MARROW PRESERVE.—Peel a vegetable marrow and cut into shapes in imitation of preserved green ginger, simmer very gently for a few minutes in syrup prepared as follows: To 1 lb. of loaf sugar add a tablespoonful of essence of ginger, the juice of a lemon and half a pint of water; boil three minutes. The syrup should be boiled up twice, adding each time a teaspoonful of essence of ginger.

STATISTICS.

FINANCES OF THE ISLE OF MAN.—The public accounts for the Isle of Man for the year ending 31st March last have been laid before Parliament. From these we learn that the sum expended under the head of "Civil List," amounting to 16,155*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.*, is composed of the following items, viz.:—Civil list, 9,758*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.*; expenses of jail, court-houses, rolls-offices, station-house, clothing of police, inquests, and repairs of the chapels, 1,508*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*; police pay, 2,411*l.* 8*s.* 1*d.*; maintenance of criminal lunatics, 48*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.*; fees expended by the Attorney-General of the island on behalf of the Crown, 183*l.* 9*s.*; harbours, 2,800*l.*; total, 16,155*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.*. The Comptroller found that two sums are claimed in excess of the amount paid during the year 1871-72, namely, in respect of rent of the temporary Government House, 4*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*, and, as regards repairs to the house, 203*l.* 10*s.* 7*d.*. The effects of these over claims would be to reduce the actual charges against the civil list from 16,155*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* to 15,872*l.* 4*s.* 5*d.*, and the total expenditure on the account from 46,091*l.* 0*s.* 3*d.* to 45,882*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.*. This would increase the balance in hand from 18,722*l.* 0*s.* 3*d.* to 18,930*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.*; and the unappropriated surplus due to the island would be also increased from 5,212*l.* 10*s.* 3*d.* to 5,420*l.* 17*s.* 3*d.*. Under the head of "One-ninth Revenue Fund," it appears that a sum of 4,812*l.* 19*s.* 3*d.* has been paid to the treasurer of the island during the year 1870-71, and the following payments have been made out of the fund during the same period under the authority of the Lords of the Treasury, amounting to 5,628*l.* 3*s.* 5*d.*, viz.:—Landing Pier at Douglas, 500*l.*; Peel, inner quay, 500*l.*; Castletown harbour, 1,000*l.*; interest on loan of 20,000*l.*, 650*l.*; on loan of 15,400*l.*, 539*l.*; on loan of 13,000*l.*, 455*l.*; for Douglas breakwater, 959*l.*; advanced to meet a claim for foreshore, Douglas, 1,900*l.*; postage, 3*s.* 5*d.*—total, 5,628*l.* 3*s.* 5*d.*. There remained a balance in the treasurer's hands on the 31st March last of 1,427*l.* 11*s.* 2*d.*, which, together with 4,000*l.* Exchequer Bills, and 400*l.* advanced to the Isle of Man Lunatic Asylum, makes the total amount standing to the credit of the "One-ninth Revenue Fund," 5,827*l.* 11*s.* 2*d.*.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A NEW costume for sea bathers at Trouville has been invented; it is of india-rubber and quite waterproof. It looks well.

THE LARGEST DIAMOND IN THE WORLD.—A Malay rajah is said to possess a larger diamond than any other in the world, and more valuable than any of the great gems of Europe. It is said to be much larger than the Koh-i-noor and to weigh 365 carats.

THE newest phase of the strike is to strike for good pay for bad work. We hear that a serious conflict is apprehended between the Staffordshire china makers and their men. Hitherto a system has been followed of paying on all work that stands the test of the oven, but the men now demand payment whether the work stands the test or not.

PROJECTED JAPANESE VISITS.—It is stated that large parties of Japanese, numbering in the aggregate nearly 1,000 individuals, are about to visit the leading cities of the civilized world in bodies of about 50 each, for the purpose of gaining information upon the manners and customs of various nations, so as to employ it to the advantage of the Japanese empire. As these people are opening us up to such an extent, a fine opportunity for the tour and excursion organizers—Cook and others—offers itself to take them in hand.

DISCOVERY OF AN ANCIENT BRITISH CIST.—The other day, while a boy was herding cows off a turnip field on the farm of Oughton, his attention was arrested by the appearance of a stone of peculiar shape and high polish, which he brought to the farmer, Mr. Clanighan. The stone turns out to be an ancient British cist. It is made of very hard gray wacke. In length it measures 6½ inches, and the circumference at three different parts—top, middle, and arching edge—are respectively 5, 7½, and 2½ inches. It is shaped something like a powder flask, and weighs about 21 lbs.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. H. B.—If by any inadvertence the announcement has been omitted, send fresh particulars.

KATE A. Having unfortunately omitted from her letter the name of the gentleman to whom she desired to respond, we are unable to forward her views.

A. W. B. (Yarmouth).—We believe we are correct in saying that the tale in question has not been published in a separate form. All the back numbers can be had by order through any bookseller, or from the office, 334, Strand, if the stamps be sent for each number.

J. B. S.—It was announced a little while ago that the London School Board intend to cause schools to be erected which will hold 100,000 children—the Board having discovered that in the metropolis there are upwards of 175,000 children who do not attend any elementary school.

L. M. E.—The letter contains one grammatical and two orthographical errors. "For this last five years" is wrong; you should have written "for these," etc. One mistake in spelling occurs in the word "grammar," for the penultimate letter of which you have put an "e" instead of an "a," the other is found in the word "correspondents," you having made the vowel in the second syllable an "o" instead of an "e."

ONE IN DOUBT.—It is a perfectly optional matter on the part of a testator whether or not he deposit his will in the registry of the Court of Probate during his lifetime, and if he does not do so even contrary to his intention the trustees are not in any way affected by the omission. The responsibility of trustees appointed under a will does not commence until the death of the testator, and only then if they do not disclaim.

A FARMER should remember that, however willing a lady may ultimately become to confer upon him her fortune as well as her hand, it is impossible she can take the smallest step in that direction before she has an opportunity of imagining at least in what sort of mould the man was cast. If in "A Farmer's" requirements "heart" happens to be no object, in the lady's notion a minute description of the mortal coil which has been shuffled on him is indispensable.

ANNIE C.—1. We have forgotten what your former letter was about; if you find that its queries are still unanswered you should send them again. 2. The name Annie is derived from the Hebrew, and signifies good-will. 3. A white rose is emblematic of worthiness in the donor of the flower, and a scarlet geranium expresses that the donor is able to make the person to whom it is given very comfortable. 4. We are unable to answer this question.

MATHIEDE.—If you consult a fashionable hair-dresser you will find that the long trailing masses of hair, or what is intended to represent it, are now only worn by those ladies who either do not know they are out of the fashion, or prefer being so. The hair is now dressed much shorter at the back and very high on the head, quite in the old "Marie Antoinette" or "Princesse de Lamballe" style; it still consists of a variety of curls, loops, and braids, but nevertheless does not disguise the throat and shape of the head.

REFORM.—1. From six to ten drops of the solution of chloride of soda in a wineglassful of spring water is the specific usually recommended. 2. It is unfair to say the West India Islands are infested with sickness, the climate simply does not agree with some persons, that is all. A sailing vessel might reach there in a month, wind and weather being favourable. 3. We do not know. 4. The band of the Grenadier Guard we believe carried off the laurels at the Boston Musical Festival. 5. English regiments are not now sent to the colonies, the old system has been altered by recent regulations. 6. The handwriting is very plain.

A PERPLEXED ONE.—1. Possibly there may be a meaning lurking under the lines of which you have sent a copy similar to that connected with some of the prophetic warnings with which the annals of the past abound. It may have been part of the donor's method of fascination to tell you that your trust was likely to be betrayed, knowing full well that you were already so entangled in the toils that your escape therefrom was exceedingly improbable. By falsely enlarging upon the fleeting nature of woman's love, which is simply a contradiction in terms, he may have hoped to put you on your mettle to show your constancy at the very moment that he spoke of love betrayed. We trust you paused in time. 2. The old-fashioned method of curl papers is we think the best. 3. Your handwriting is careless.

R. S.—We are sorry to read what, from the cheerful point of view you have hitherto taken in your epistles to us, must be styled a mournful communication full of use-

less regrets; and since you are so earnest in the matter we are still more sorry that we cannot comply with your request and insert the verses you have written about "It might have been." As we have often said, your ideas are very good, but the mode in which you convey them to others is inartistic to say the least about it. Passing by your curious commingling of blank verse with the oddest of rhyme and other impedimenta, we beg to express our hope that, health and leisure permitting, you will recall those sad words "for the last time," and that you will suffer us to remind you "It might have been worse" and "It is never too late to mend."

TENNES J.—1. The voice is improved by practice and by diet. It is a point to keep up the physical strength. 2. Pimples often arise from a bad habit of body which should be changed by suitable medicine and exercise. Ask a chemist to prescribe something that will agree with your constitution. 3. Indian-rubber will take the dirt off soiled music. If the music is greased also, apply in addition a flat heated iron and brown paper. 4. Eau-de-cologne and glycerine when applied to the hands have a beneficial effect. 5. The application of oil to the hair is usually objected to on the score of cleanliness. 6. In fashionable circles the hair is now worn more on the top of the head than formerly, so as to show the back part of the neck. 7. The name of Henry is a Teutonic name and signifies a hero. 8. The colour of the hair appears to be dark-brown tinged with red.

STRIKING FOR WAGES.

He's a blacksmith proud of his lot,
He strikes hard when the iron is hot.
The red sparks glow like fire-flies winging.
"Ten pound ten" can never be got
Unless he keeps the anvil ringing.

Strike again!

"Ten pound ten!"

Working well with an iron will,
He can always foot the grocer's bill.
Good luck from every blow upspringing;
That is the way the pockets fill—
Money chimes to the anvil's ringing.

Strike again!

"Ten pound ten!"

He strikes for wages, and he gets
Money enough to pay his debts,
And more, for he keeps his hammer swinging.
Pride and poverty spread their nets
In vain for him whose anvil's ringing.

Strike again!

"Ten pound ten!"

His anvil chorus every day
Awakes the sleepers over the way,
And they hear him merrily singing.
"There's time to work and there's time to play,
Now is the time for anvil ringing."

Strike again!

"Ten pound ten!"

Amid a shower of sparks he stands,
With an open face and honest hands,
Where the wasp of want cannot come stinging.
The house he built is not on sands,
It is as firm as the anvil ringing.

Strike again!

"Ten pound ten!"

When he grows old and bent and gray,
And long before, he can rest and play,
In golden years sweet pleasure bringing,
And hear his great-grandchildren say,
"There's music in the anvil's ringing."

Strike again!

"Ten pound ten!"

G. W. B.

K. M., nineteen, tall, pretty, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be fond of home, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

NELLY S., twenty-five, blue eyes, golden hair, a blonde, and of domesticated habits; would like to marry a nice young man about her own age.

JOSHUA, twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., very fair, and in a good position. Respondent must be pretty, and about twenty-one.

LAVINIA, twenty-eight, tall, domesticated, and fond of children. Would like to marry a tall young man about her own age.

CLARA M., twenty-six, medium height, loving and affectionate, would like to marry a young man about twenty-nine; a tradesman preferred.

N. N., twenty-eight, rather short, fair complexion, and is a soldier. Respondent must not be over twenty, and fond of children.

ANN S., eighteen, tall, pretty, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, handsome, and about twenty-seven.

THOMAS C., twenty-five, rather short, dark complexion. Respondent must be pretty, domesticated, and not under twenty.

B. S., twenty-one, 5ft. 4in., blue eyes, dark hair, fair complexion, considered handsome, would like to marry a young girl about eighteen; a tailor's preferred.

JULIA, eighteen, blue eyes, light hair, would like to marry a respectable young mechanic about twenty-one.

JOHN C., twenty-two, tall, dark, handsome, and a tradesman. Respondent must be tall, fair, and have a little money.

WILLIE, twenty-four, 5ft. 9in., a sapper in the Royal Engineers, wishes to marry a young lady who is fond of children.

MARY ELIZABETH, nineteen, tall, very respectable, fair, and passable in looks, would like to marry a sailor; looks no consequence.

EMMA M., eighteen, tall, rather fair, dark hair and eyes, loving, domesticated, and good tempered. Respondent must be twenty-one, handsome, and in the Navy.

N. N. N., twenty-two, short, stout, nice looking, dark hair, gray eyes, and can keep a clean and tidy house

Respondent must be dark, loving, fond of home, and able to keep a wife.

LISA, twenty-six, tall, handsome, and fond of home and children, wishes to marry a young man who is handsome, loving, and able to make a wife happy; a tradesman preferred.

ANNETTE N., twenty-five, rather short, rosy cheeks, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must not be over thirty, dark, handsome, fond of home and children; an officer in the Army preferred.

FRANK M., twenty-three, tall, dark, handsome, and of an independent position. Respondent must be about his own age, tall, pretty, and have no objection to go abroad.

B. K., thirty, tall, dark moustache, a widower with one child, and a tradesman. Respondent must be about twenty-six, loving, make a good wife, and able to manage a house.

LILL, twenty-three, blue eyes, light-brown hair, pretty, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-eight, tall, handsome, of a loving disposition, and have a little money.

CAREFUL, thirty, medium height, rather stout, pretty, well educated, in a fancy business, and loving. Respondent must be a sober, respectable man in an independent position.

I. W. L., twenty-five, 5ft. 8in., dark-brown eyes, fair complexion, loving, and a tradesman's son. Respondent must be about eighteen, tall, dark, good figure, and well educated.

DICK, twenty-seven, short, rather stout, dark moustache, and able to keep a wife. Respondent must be a servant about nineteen, thoroughly domesticated and fond of music.

L. S., eighteen, medium height, blue eyes, auburn hair, and of domesticated habits. Would like to correspond with a tall, handsome young man, who has a little business of his own.

NINA, nineteen, medium height, blue eyes, fair complexion, light hair, genteel figure, accomplished, and very loving. Respondent must be tall, dark, and in a good position; an officer preferred. "Nina" has an income.

CAMELOTIAN, twenty-four, 5ft. 6in., dark, considered handsome by his messmates, and has very good prospects. Respondent must be tall, fair, fond of music, and of a loving disposition; money no object.

ALORPUS, twenty-one, medium height, fair, handsome, fond of music, in the Navy, and has good expectations. Respondent must be very handsome, fair, about his own age, fond of music, and a Roman Catholic.

BABE, twenty-two, average height, considered handsome, domesticated, fond of music and children, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, fair, in a very lucrative situation, and about twenty-eight or twenty-nine.

K. S. S., nineteen, short, dark hair and eyes, loving, good pianist, well educated, and would have no objection to living abroad. Respondent must not be under twenty-five, tall, handsome, and loving; he must be in a good situation.

W. W., twenty-three, medium height, very pretty, loving, and the daughter of parents in an independent position, wishes to marry a steady young man who is not over twenty-seven, handsome, loving, intelligent, and a Frenchman.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ARTHUR is responded to by—"Ada D." twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., rather dark, and thoroughly accomplished.

EMMA by—"William," twenty-one, 5ft. 3in., a native of London, and all she can desire.

WILLIAM by—"May," twenty-one, nice looking, and fond of home and children.

HORACE by—"Bessie," who is all that "Horace" wishes for.

JOHN S. by—"Ida V." twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., fair, and thoroughly domesticated.

CAROLINE by—"Sly," twenty, 5ft. 6in., dark complexion, blue eyes, fond of home, and in the Navy.

HILL S. by—"Betsey B." twenty-five, medium height, fair, domesticated, and would make a good wife.

JOSEPH by—"L. F." twenty-three, tall, dark hair and eyes, domesticated, able to keep a house clean, and would make a loving wife.

JAMES by—"Lizzie," twenty, medium height, fair complexion, dark hair and eyes, loving, fond of home, and has a great wish to go to America.

EDWARD by—"Polly," who has been accustomed to travelling, and thinks she meets the requirements of "Edward."

RUDOLPH by—"Lizzie," twenty-eight, tall, auburn hair, hazel eyes, is cook in a nobleman's family, and fond of music.

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